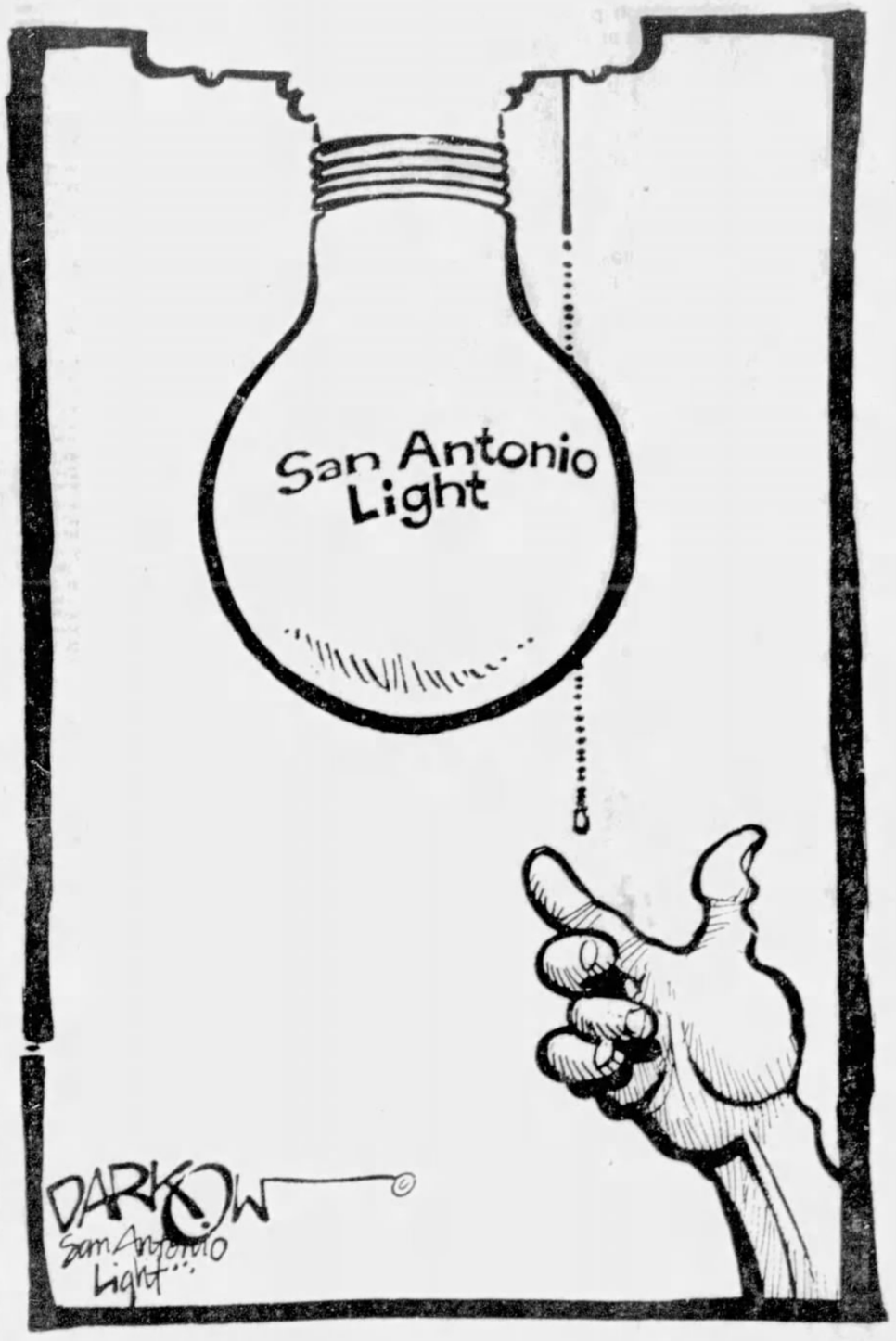
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

THURSDAY
JANUARY 28, 1993

San Antonio Light

1881-1993



JOHN DARKOW

Paper closing after 112 years

By JEANNIE KEVER
City editor

In the end, it all came down to a few words.

"The Department of Justice ... does not intend to challenge under the antitrust laws Hearst's proposed acquisition of the San Antonio Express-News."

With that, the 112-year-old Light ceased publication Wednesday. Publisher George B. Irish made the formal announcement in a hastily called meeting shortly after noon.

But word already had spread. Employees seemed both relieved and saddened to finally hear an official announcement.

"I'm going to say, effective this moment, employees are released," Irish said, standing on a chair to address employees crowded together in The Light's second-floor newsroom. His comments drew both cheers and tears as the news sank in that nearly four months of uncertainty about the newspaper's and the staff's futures was finally over.

"Your personal courtesies to me will never be forgotten," Irish said in a closing comment to the employees, many of whom lined up to shake hands or hug The Light's final publisher.

"We've been waiting so long for the other shoe to drop that now, it's almost as stunning as October 6 was," said Lora Butler, a five-year employee who worked in The Light's community relations department.

On Oct. 6, Frank A. Bennack Jr., president and chief executive officer of The Hearst Corp., had announced that Hearst planned to buy the rival Express-News from Rupert Murdoch's News America Corp. for $185 million, shutting down The Light if no buyer could be found.

At the time, Hearst said The Light had lost $60 million since 1987.

"The past few months have been a difficult and painful period for all of us who are employees of The San Antonio Light," Irish said in a statement. "Despite the turmoil caused by this prolonged transition, The Light staff has performed at the highest level of professionalism."

Hearst had cited several reasons for dropping The Light and taking over the Express-News, mainly the Express-News' larger circulation and advertising sales, which Hearst attributed to reader preference for a morning newspaper. The Light was primarily an afternoon paper until the early 1980s.

As of October, the Express-News had a daily circulation of 188,797 and 284,728 on Sunday. The Light had a daily circulation of 148,591, and 221,186 on Sunday.

The gap widened in the ensuing months, as the newspaper's 620 employees were left in limbo.

As required by the federal plant-closing notification law, Light employees were given 60 days notice soon after the October announcement. When the end of that period approached, they were given a revised notice and told the closing had been postponed to between Dec. 30 and Jan. 12.

On Jan. 11, the closing was postponed again until between Jan. 17 and Jan. 30.

The Justice Department did not have to approve the sale or closing of The Light. However, it had to be satisfied that no qualified buyer could be found before clearing Hearst's acquisition of the Express-News.

Several potential buyers toured the newspaper in recent months, and a few tendered bids as the Justice Department's antitrust division conducted an exhaustive review. The final bids were rejected earlier this week, Irish said.

Employees will be offered outplacement services beginning next week and will be interviewed for available jobs at other Hearst newspapers, including the Express-News.

After Bennack's announcement last fall, employees were offered a $1,000 retention bonus, on top of a severance package, as an incentive to stay until the end.

An undetermined number of employees will remain on the payroll for at least a few months to wrap up final details, Irish said.

Among them is Georgie Merritt, an accounts payable supervisor who has spent 22 ½ years at The Light.

As someone working with the newspaper's books, she said, the ending was no suprise.

"I've seen it coming for a long time," she said after Wednesday's announcement. "Now that it's finally done, it's sad that it had to be The Light."

Looking back

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City must come to grips with loss of old friend

By NORA LOPEZ
and MIKE TOLSON
Staff reporters

At half past 10 on Tuesday morning, Oct. 6, employees throughout the San Antonio Light building were notified of an urgent meeting on the third floor, just outside the offices of the newspaper's advertising executives.

No one knew what the gathering was about, although word spread that it had something to do with the future of the newspaper. A quick look at the grave, ashen face of Frank A. Bennack Jr., president and chief executive officer of The Hearst Corp., was all the confirmation anyone needed that the news was bad.

"The Hearst Corporation ... announced today," Bennack began, his voice low, "that agreement had been reached for the acquisition by Hearst from the News Corporation of the Express-News for a cash purchase price of $185 million."

There was a moment of confusion among employees. Wasn't that good news? The answer came quickly. Hearst would search for a buyer for The Light. If no buyer was forthcoming ...

"Hearst ... would reluctantly close the newspaper."

Bennack answered a few questions from the stunned group and departed quickly to deliver the same announcement at the Express-News. There was little discernible reaction from the assemblage of people suddenly imperiled by unemployment.

Everyone with a passing acquaintance of newspaper economics and trends could see the day coming when such an announcement would be made at one of San Antonio's papers. But nobody saw it coming so soon.

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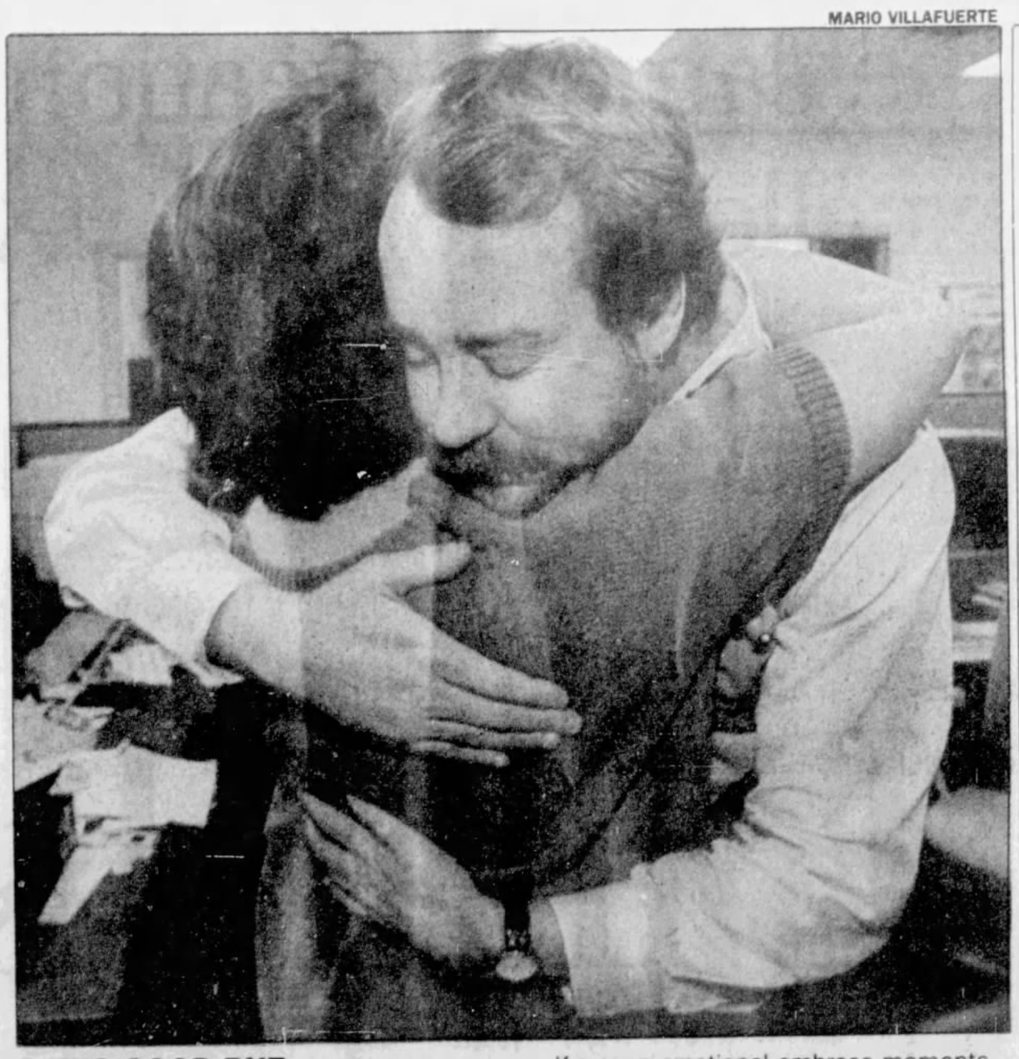
MARIO VILLAFUERTE



A HUG GOOD-BYE: Staff reporter Michael Pearson gives City Editor Jeannie Kever an emotional embrace moments after the closing was announced.

RICK CASEY

A reason to remain: Plenty of outhouses

In 1967, as a cub reporter here, I felt my first taste of the power of a metropolitan daily.

I wrote a story about a six-block area only a mile or so from the new Tower of the Americas, where residents still had outhouses because the city had never bothered to put in sewers.

A dramatic photograph by Joe Castillo (now Bexar County juvenile probation chief) accompanied the story, showing a child and a tricycle in front of an outhouse, with the Tower looming in the background.

The neighborhood got its sewers, and I was given to understand the publicity played a role by shaming city officials.

It was the glow of that success, not the $78-a-week union scale, that hooked me.

H.L. Mencken wrote, "Conscience is the inner voice that warns us that someone may be looking."

That voice is about to grow softer in San Antonio, and the city will be poorer for it. One team of eyes is disbanding.

Some officials will be relieved. The Light, over the past decade at least, has been the newspaper

Please turn to page 12

WE SALUTE OUR FRIENDS AT THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT

Dillard's is dedicated to the principles of quality, integrity and service. We are proud to have been associated with a newspaper that exhibited the same dedication to excellence for 112 years.

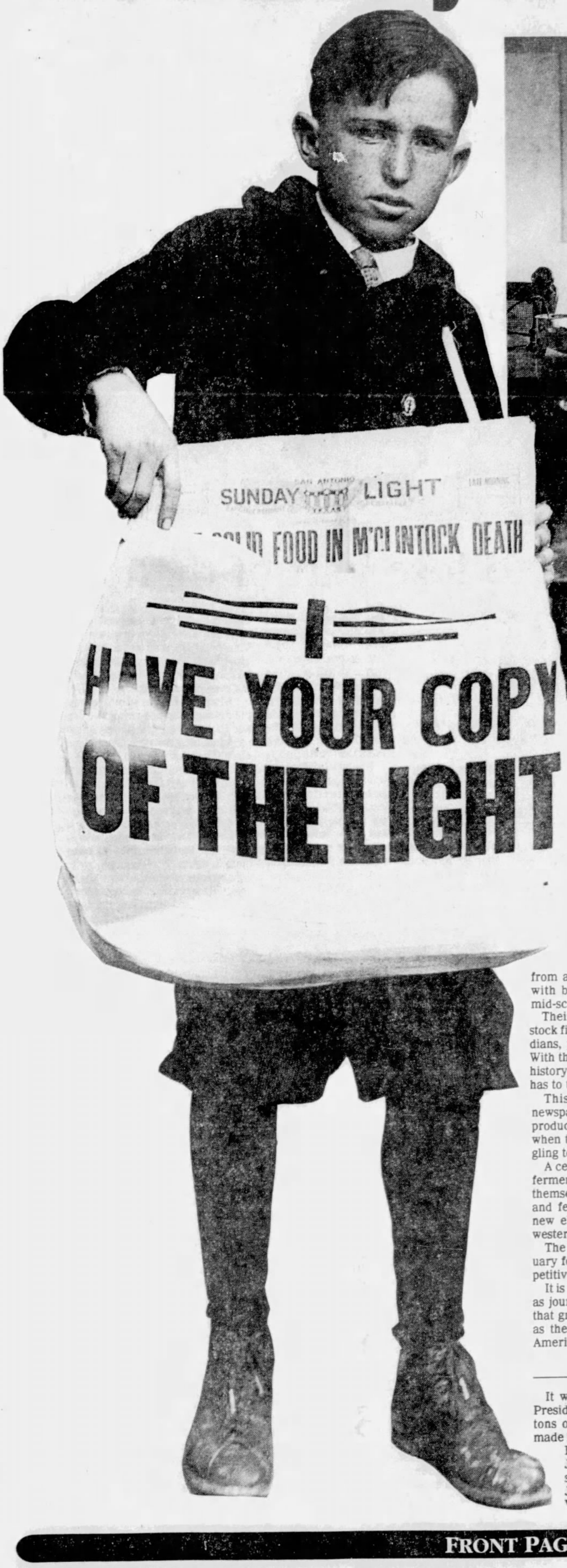
Dillard's

SHOP DILLARD'S NORTH STAR, RIVERCENTER, ROLLING OAKS, CENTRAL PARK, INGRAM PARK AND WINDSOR PARK. SHOP MONDAY-SATURDAY 10-9; SUNDAY 12-6. DILLARD'S AND ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS WELCOME.

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

'We shall cry aloud and spare not'



A LOOK BACK: A street hawker, left, displays his delivery bag in this circa-1930 photo. Above, copy editors work at a traditional "horseshoe desk" with editors working stories on the "rim" and the lead editor sitting in the "slot."

From its birth to its death, The Light lived story of American journalism

By MARK LEWIS and DAVID TARRANT
Staff reporters

They hawk The Light from the wall of the Institute of Texan Cultures: Two newsboys, ragged street urchins from a '30s movie, tempting passers-by with banner headlines now muted in mid-scream.

Their photos form part of a parade of stock figures from the past – cowboys, Indians, pioneers – lining the lobby wall. With this issue, The Light, too, fades into history, after 112 years. The final story it has to tell is its own.

This is also the story of American newspaper journalism, for The Light is a product of that hustling, energetic era when the modern newspaper was struggling to be born.

A century later the industry again is in ferment, with papers trying to reinvent themselves to serve a post-literate world and fend off challenges from potential new electronic competitors like Southwestern Bell.

The Light's death notice is also an obituary for afternoon papers, and for competitive newspaper markets.

It is the story of a distinct voice in Texas journalism, a scrappy frontier paper that grew into a San Antonio institution, as the city itself evolved into a major American metropolis.

It was a bad year for Billy the Kid, President James Garfield and the Clantons of OK Corral fame, all of whom made headlines by getting gunned down.

But 1881 was an auspicious year for James P. Newcomb, proprietor of several failed newspapers, who on Jan. 20 introduced San Antonio to Vol. 1, No. 1 of The Evening Light.

> *It was the tightest two-newspaper battle in the country.*
>
> **–GEORGE B. IRISH**
> Publisher of The Light

The fast-growing city already supported several papers, but Newcomb wedged his way into the market with lively commentary on local politics: "We shall tread on old toes; we shall cry aloud and spare not," The Light promised readers.

It spared not the competition; that first issue included a snide denunciation of "the nincompoop who steals the stale puns out of patent medicine almanacs and attempts to pass them off as original . . . in the Sunday Express."

The early Light was put out by hand press, it had ads on the front page and its "reporting" was little more than partisan sniping at local bigwigs who failed to meet with Newcomb's approval.

There were no photographs, no graphics, no color. Nothing but four pages of fine print, broken occasionally by tiny, generic headlines. "City Council Notes" and "Hotel Arrivals" were among the hot front-page items. And all for a nickel a copy.

But American journalism was changing, and The Light changed with it. The last decades of the century saw the birth of a new kind of newspaper, as Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst competed for working-class readers with screaming headlines, contests, comics and muck-raking crusades.

When he added The Light to his newspaper empire in 1924, the paper heralded the purchase with a headline identifying its new owner as "William Randolph Hearst, World's Greatest Publisher."

But when Hearst died in 1951, The Light was trailing in the circulation battle.

Then, in a famous 1952 coup, The Light picked up the competition's most popular syndicated comics, including "Dick Tracy" and "Little Orphan Annie." Within a week, it had vaulted into the top position.

The Express-News later returned the favor, snagging "Dear Abby" to go with "Ann Landers" and denying The Light access to the nation's most popular advice columnists. Thus the battle went, with competing reporters occasionally stealing each other's notes while the competing papers stole each other's reporters.

By 1973, The Light, with a circulation of 123,000, dominated its afternoon competitor, the News, which had 63,000. The Express, with a circulation of 84,000, enjoyed a morning monopoly.

On Sundays, The Light led with 170,000 to 133,000 for the combined Express-News.

"The Light was ahead of the Express and News for 20 years or more, but The Light just went to sleep," said Bert Wise, former executive editor for the Express-News. "It didn't matter until Rupert Murdoch bought the papers."

Murdoch. Often reviled as the Hearst of his era, presumably he takes it as a compliment. Certainly few contemporary media moguls have been as controversial as Rupert Murdoch, or as successful.

He had made his fortune in Britain and his native Australia with a sizzling, souped-up version of the early, populist Hearst approach. In 1973, he took on Hearst's heirs,

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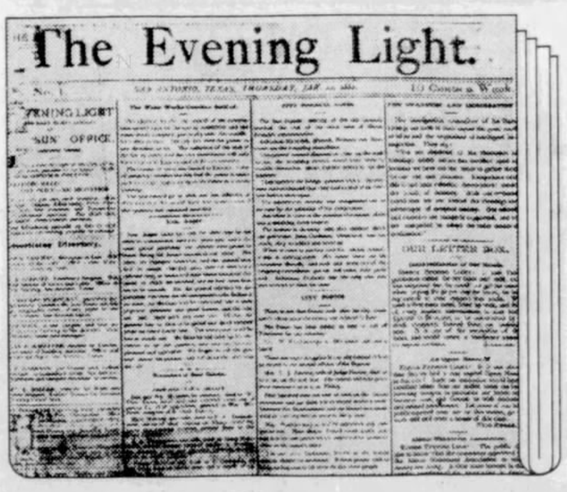
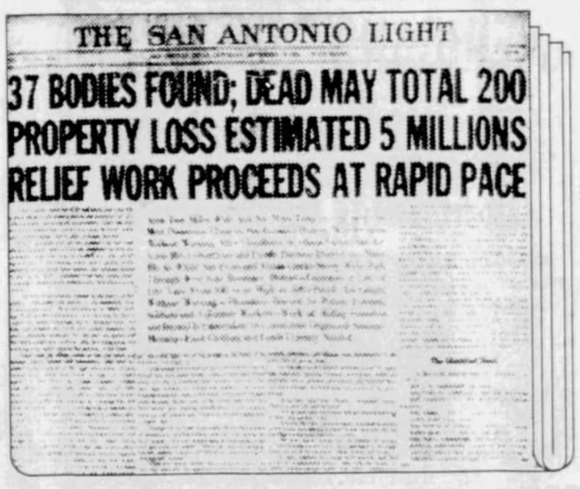
FRONT PAGES THROUGH THE YEARS


The Evening Light.

1881: James P. Newcomb introduces The Evening Light on Jan. 20. He promised readers the paper "shall tread on old toes; we shall cry aloud and spare not."


THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT
37 BODIES FOUND; DEAD MAY TOTAL 200
PROPERTY LOSS ESTIMATED 5 MILLIONS
RELIEF WORK PROCEEDS AT RAPID PACE

1921: The Light filled the entire front page of the Sept. 16, 1921, edition with news of the most disastrous flood in the history of San Antonio.

THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHT

1924: It was front-page news when William Randolph Hearst bought The Light. This article in the May 25, 1924, edition described Hearst as the "world's greatest publisher."

THE LIGHT HOME EDITION
U. S. DECLARES WAR

1941: The headline said it all on Dec. 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The paper carried reports of the dawn raid as well as stories about local reaction.

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

Continued from previous page

buying the Express and News from Harte-Hanks Communications, a San Antonio-based media chain, for $20 million.

The two sides fought tooth-and-nail for almost 20 years and, unlike what has happened in most competitive markets, they stayed relatively close in circulation and advertising.

"It was the tightest two-newspaper battle in the country," said George B. Irish, publisher of The Light since 1988.

At the end, The Light had a daily circulation of 148,000 to the Express-News' 188,000, and trailed on Sundays with 221,000 to the Express-News' 284,000. The Light's share of advertising revenues was about the same as its circulation share – about 45 percent.

More crucially, fierce competition for advertising kept rates so low that it was difficult to make a profit, said Larry R. Wynn, The Light's vice president and general manager.

When The Light tried to hold firm with more realistic rates, advertisers generally declined to go along, partly because they still thought of The Light as an afternoon paper whose readers tended to have lower incomes than Express-News readers, Wynn said.

That problem became especially acute after the Texas economy crashed in the mid '80s. "The newspapers lost a third of their business in 1986," Irish said.

Until then, both papers generally had made money. Now the situation deteriorated, especially after such major advertisers as Joske's disappeared in a wave of department-store mergers.

The margin of error was razor thin, and any serious mistake was likely to be fatal.

"If one of the two parties blinks . . . it gets to be a kind of inevitable scenario," said Bob Marbut Sr., former Harte-Hanks president.

The Light made a serious run at the Express-News in the late '80s, when the phenomenal popularity of its new Loteria game boosted circulation dramatically. But local advertisers, suffering from a weak economy, refused to pay higher rates.

"It never really translated into the megadollars that we needed," said Sergio Salinas, The Light's advertising and marketing director.

As the Loteria boom subsided, the endgame began in earnest in 1989 when Murdoch announced a major plant expansion (at one point billed as a $94 million project but later scaled back to about $80 million). Included were state-of-the-art printing presses that would vastly upgrade the paper's color capability.

By this time, industry analysts said, Murdoch had shifted his focus to movies and television, and had piled up a mountain of debt that he was busy reducing. Rather than continue an expensive newspaper competition in San Antonio, he decided to sell to Hearst.

But Murdoch wanted to go out a winner in San Antonio, and with the Express-News in the stronger position, he was able to bargain hard. Had no deal been reached, Hearst probably would have had to upgrade its own presses. The rivalry could have gone on for years, with each side losing millions trying to bleed the other dry.

In the end, Hearst did buy new presses – Murdoch's. Hearst gets a newspaper monopoly, Murdoch gets a premium return on his investment and San Antonio loses a spirited newspaper that has chronicled the city's ups and downs for more than a century.

NOW AND THEN: A pressman, above, checks the press run in this circa-1930 photo. Although both the presses and the pressman have been replaced in the years since this photo was taken, former employees have always been special to The Light. At right, Light Publisher George B. Irish greets retired pressman James Watkins and his wife, Amy, at a 1992 luncheon for Light retirees.

Retirees didn't expect to lose part of their past

By VERONICA FLORES and SUZANNE McAULIFFE
Staff reporters

They have survived the change from typewriters and Teletypes to computers and satellite transmissions.

But there is one change retirees of The San Antonio Light never expected to see: the closing of their newspaper.

"A lot of my life is there," said Fern Chick, whose career at The Light spanned 21 years. "I'm sure some of my tear drops are there."

Chick retired in 1990 as a copy editor. Reviewing the years, she recalled with fondness times when the publisher would show up unexpectedly in the newsroom, bearing chicken dinners for those who worked late covering big stories.

"There are lives that were spent there," she said, dolefully. "I guess all that will be left are a bunch of ghosts."

Though Chick and other retirees or their beneficiaries will continue to receive their pensions, which are protected by federal law and company policy, future payments can only serve as a constant reminder that an important part of their lives is gone forever.

Johnny Idar, who retired in 1990 as composing room foreman, still is struggling with feelings of sorrow and disbelief that his work place of 44 years no longer will exist.

Idar recalled one frantic night when he phoned Frank Bennack Jr. – then Light publisher, now president and chief executive officer of The Hearst Corp. – at 3 a.m. to alert him that a former employee was trying to sabotage the press room by releasing carbon dioxide intended for use in the event of a fire.

"He always told me if anything happened that I thought merited his attention to call him," Idar said. "So I called him, and he came down in his bathrobe and smoking his pipe. I had lot of admiration for him."

> *There are lives that were spent there. I guess all that will be left are a bunch of ghosts.*
>
> **–FERN CHICK**
> Retired columnist

R. Jean Osborne, who began working at the newspaper as a photographer in 1947, said rumors frequently surfaced over the years that The Light was for sale.

But when Hearst finally announced it was buying the Express-News and – absent a buyer – closing down The Light, it was like a bad dream come true.

"I hate to see it," said Osborne, who retired in 1986, "but I guess it was just inevitable."

Osborne also begrudges the end of a competitive battle that was at its fiercest when The Light was up against the Express and the News, before the latter two newspapers merged.

"If a reporter or photographer was palling around with some reporter or photographer from the opposite paper," he said, "you had a good chance of being fired, because they (newspaper managers) didn't want information being passed back and forth."

Raymond Robinson did not participate directly in the daily battle. But the 68-year-old retiree had his share of excitement as The Light's elevator operator, a job he held until the mid-1980s, when the building's lift was automated.

Robinson, who retired in 1989, recalled when a live cougar was brought into the building to be used in an ad for a car dealership.

"He was pretty large," Robinson said. "I was the closest one to him, and I wasn't about to move. He (the handler) told me not to make any sudden moves. So I didn't."

Robinson said he was stunned to learn the work place where he spent half his life was closing.

"It (the job) meant a whole lot," he added, "because I met a whole lot of nice people."

Gerry McCabe, a former newspaper layout manager, said his recollection of The Light some 40 years past is that the company fostered in employees a sense of family. That bond became even stronger by the 1952 "Dick Tracy" coup many credit with pushing The Light ahead of the Express in the race for subscribers.

"When the Express decided not to carry the Chicago Tribune comics – 'Dick Tracy' and those – we immediately picked them up," McCabe recalled, "and The Light's circulation skyrocketed."

Even when circulation figures were low, McCabe never forgot former publisher Col. Bernard Horner's bittersweet quote: "We don't make a lot of money, but we have a lot of fun here."

"I thought that was a little funny at first," said McCabe. "But I grew to believe that. It was a very homey, little family-type operation when I came there."

For Kemper Diehl, The Light's demise signals the end of an era that began when his grandfather, Charles Sanford Diehl, and Harrison L. Beach sold the newspaper to William Randolph Hearst in 1924.

"As I thought it over, it's pretty sad," Diehl said of the closing. "I sort of grew up with The Light. I heard all these newspaper stories, so I sort of associated myself with The Light since childhood."

Diehl left The Light in the mid 1960s, after 25 years capped by producing a popular weekly political page tagged Don Politico. Though he later went to work for the Express-News, he laments the passing of a 112-year-old institution.

"It's a tragic hole in the city."

The Express-News prevailed in the end, but its victory hardly seemed inevitable when Murdoch first came to town. He focused first on the News, challenging The Light's afternoon position with a wild-and-woolly approach that featured heavily promoted contests, tabloid-style headlines and cheesecake photographs of scantily clad women.

"He knew how to capture the public's attention," Wise said.

The News captured lots of attention and gained circulation, but The Light held its lead.

As things turned out, it was the more sedate Express that held the key to Murdoch's eventual dominance. The Light and the News had been fighting over something that, in the end, wasn't worth having: the afternoon newspaper market.

In recent years, announcements of newspaper failures or mergers have become relentless: Dallas. Tulsa. Little Rock. Miami. Jacksonville. Baltimore. Kansas City. Richmond. Spokane. San Diego. Anchorage. Pittsburgh.

Since 1985, 110 cities have seen papers close or merge. Fewer than a dozen markets retain any real competition, and the odds are stacked against most of them in the long run.

Two papers can survive in such large markets as New York, Boston and Chicago, where "there are enough subscribers and enough advertisers to reach different parts of the market," said Robert Picard, a communications professor at California State University at Fullerton who edits the Journal of Media Economics.

"But as you get down to the smaller cities, it gets almost impossible," he said. "The amount of advertising dollars is just too small."

Just 20 years ago, newspaper competition thrived. In 1971, there were 66 cities with two or more dailies under separate ownership, including 18 operating under an arrangement that allows competing newspapers to merge business operations but keep separate editorial staffs.

Federal law allows this arrangement to preserve competing editorial voices when one paper otherwise would close. But today the number of two-newspaper towns has dropped to 36, half of which, including El Paso, San Francisco and Seattle, have joint operating agreements.

In 1991, advertising revenues dropped nationwide for the first time in recent memory as a result of the recession. That may have been the final straw for newspapers already struggling against stronger competitors.

"There is only so much advertising to go around," said Joe Lorfana, director of public affairs at the Newspaper Association of America. "When the economy slides, advertisers go with what they consider the major paper in the market."

The survivors generally are those with a history as a morning publication, traditionally preferred by the upscale readers that advertisers target.

Afternoon papers face other problems: Television has preempted the newspaper in the evening; rush-hour traffic has slowed distribution as suburbs grow.

Some afternoon papers – including The Light – switched to morning or all-day publication to boost circulation, but never overcame the competing morning papers' advantage.

From 1960 to 1991, the number of afternoon newspapers fell from 1,459 to 1,042, while morning papers went from 312 to 571.

Total morning circulation has doubled since World War II to 41 million readers, while afternoon circulation has dropped from 30.3 million to 19.2 million.

So while Rupert Murdoch lavished his attention on the feisty afternoon News, the morning Express – dominant on the city's more affluent North Side – was sitting on the only newspaper gold mine in town.

"When times changed and afternoon papers became harder sells, The Light had to struggle to go upscale," said Ed Rademaekers, editor of The Light. "The Express already had that, and it's always easier to go down market than to go up market."

The decline in afternoon papers was not the only challenge facing San Antonio's newspapers in the '70s. Nationwide, direct mail and giveaway "shopper" papers cut into the advertising pie.

And younger Americans, reared on television, were less likely to read a newspaper than their parents had been.

Longtime Light publisher Frank A. Bennack Jr. had moved to New York in 1974 to join Hearst's corporate hierarchy. Observers say The Light grew complacent at a crucial turning point in the competition.

Murdoch's most effective innovations – the Wingo game, the "Star" tabloid gossip insert in the Sunday Express-News – went unanswered at first while The Light sat on its lead.

Slowly awakening to the danger, The Light began repositioning itself as an all-day paper, starting a home-delivery morning edition in 1981. But the Express retained its morning lead.

"When an afternoon newspaper tries to change its spots, it's very hard to do, and it's also expensive," Marbut said.

By 1981, The Light had lost its lead on Sundays. Yet until the mid '80s, it failed to emulate Murdoch by promoting the paper

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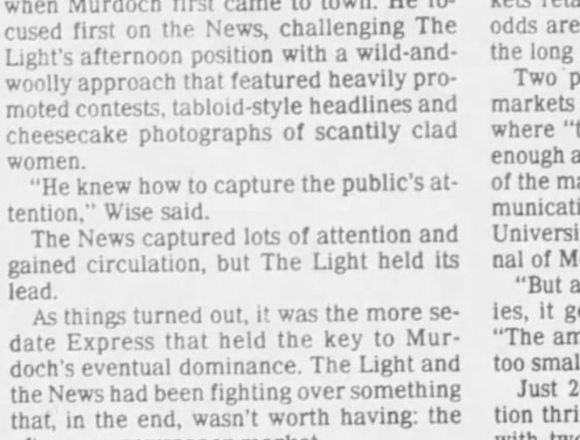
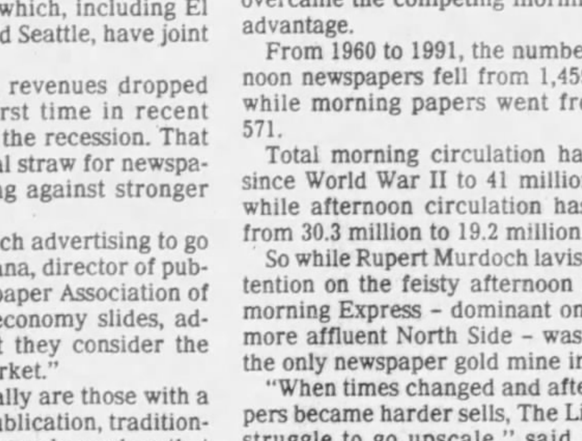
FRONT PAGES THROUGH THE YEARS

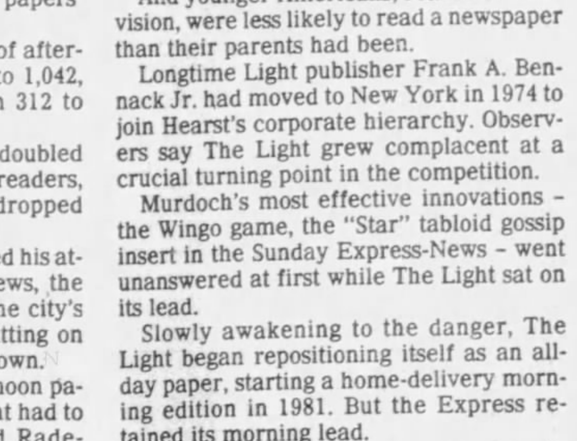


1963: Links to communism dominated The Light's coverage of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The Nov. 23, 1963, edition included a front-page editorial.

1968: The Light offered a giant welcome to HemisFair '68 in its April 8 edition, devoting the entire front page to the world's fair, including a large aerial photo of HemisFair Plaza.



1969: Unable to contain the news of the first man to land on the moon to regular editions, The Light put out a "Lunar Extra" on July 21, 1969, to commemorate the event.



1986: The Light used detailed graphics to explain what happened when the space shuttle Challenger exploded. The Jan. 29, 1986, edition included an eight-page special section.

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

'Our aim was to raise expectations'

Continued from previous page

heavily on television and radio.

"They got a great big gap against us before we responded," Wynn said.

In hindsight, some observers think that by the early '80s it already was too late to turn things around.

"The battle probably was won 10 years ago," said Robert Blanchard, chairman of Trinity University's communications department. "It's just kind of been playing itself out."

Be that as it may, The Light still had the biggest Monday-through-Friday circulation in 1980, when Hearst brought Robert Page in from New York as editor and associate publisher to shake things up.

"He was the one who paved the way for the more modern Light," Rademaekers said.

Page, a high-ranking United Press International executive, had grand ambitions for The Light, and was willing to spend lots of money to accomplish them.

That brought him into immediate conflict with the late Bill Bellamy, Bennack's successor as publisher, who kept a close eye on the bottom line.

> *The battle probably was won 10 years ago. It's just kind of been playing itself out.*
>
> **–ROBERT BLANCHARD**
> Chairman of Trinity University's communications department

Seven months later Page was out, having lost his power struggle with Bellamy. He went right across the street to work for Murdoch, and later headed papers in Boston and Chicago.

Hearst, meanwhile, cast about for another visionary to reinvigorate The Light, and settled on Ted Warmbold, a top editor at the company's Los Angeles Herald-Examiner.

In the '80s, The Light followed the lead of industry trailblazer USA Today with better graphics, more color, more attention to design.

It adopted a more inclusive approach to cultural coverage, especially the arts. The evolution of the old "women's pages" into a modern lifestyle section accelerated, with special emphasis on social issues.

It beefed up business coverage, which until then had been handled by one reporter. A daily business section was created and a separate business staff hired.

It expanded sports coverage, increasing the section's staff and almost doubling its space to create TotalSports in 1986.

"Our goal was to be the only outlet in town for the complete sports story," Managing Editor Jeff Cohen said. "We wanted to dominate coverage, and I think we did."

It focused on investigative journalism, nurturing a group of younger reporters imbued with a post-Watergate enthusiasm for taking on establishment institutions rarely challenged by the local newspapers before.

Traditionally, The Light had considered itself a pillar of the city's establishment. Now it groped for a more detached perspective, offering constructive criticism instead of knee-jerk support. (That occasionally sparked a backlash, as when stories about rogue cop Stephen Smith led to complaints that The Light was anti-police.)

It reached out to groups that felt excluded, including the city's Hispanic majority.

"Most Hispanics read The Light," but they had not often felt welcome in the newsroom, said Sonia Hernandez, who was president of Communities Organized for Public Service from 1983 to 1985.

Hiring more Hispanic reporters and editors became a priority. Community leaders, including activists, were invited to serve rotating terms on the paper's editorial board.

Before, "The sense was that both newspapers were organs for the business community," Hernandez said. By the mid-'80s, "There was a real change in attitude" at The Light.

Women, too, were placed in positions of responsibility. Lynnell Burkett, brought in to help run The Light's editorial page in 1987, became its editor the following year.

But the Express-News' North Side readers proved frustratingly loyal to their longtime paper.

"That's where they really had us," said Bob Wilson, The Light's former general manager. "There was nothing we could do to change that reader habit."

The Light hoped to win over new residents flocking to San Antonio, especially to the North Side, during the '80s boom. Then the bust hit, the growth stopped and the redesigned Light found itself all dressed up with nowhere to go.

"Essentially it was designed to meet and greet people who were no longer coming to San Antonio," said Rademaekers, whom Warmbold brought in as managing editor in 1982.

Not everyone thought the new Light was better.

Jan Jarboe, who served as Page's managing editor, thinks in retrospect that reaching out to upscale neighborhoods was a mistake.

"We were kind of embarrassed by our populist roots, we wanted to be more sophisticated," said Jarboe, now a senior editor at Texas Monthly. "When we tried to become the North Side paper, we lost our way."

But Jarboe concedes that The Light was caught in an awkward position between the dull, newspaper-of-record Express and the sensationalist News.

"We were sandwiched," she said. "They had the gray lady in the morning and the saucy whore in the evening. . . . There was nowhere we could go."

Jarboe herself went to the Express-News, as a columnist. But at The Light, the plan was set: Keep the News off-balance and go after the Express, gradually switching more and more resources to the morning editions.

Then in 1984, Murdoch counterpunched. The Express and News merged their weekday editions into a single, all-day paper.

"Our strategy was to wait until The Light picked the paper it wanted to compete with" and then shift resources to the appropriate front, said Charles Kilpatrick, the longtime Express-News publisher who retired in 1990.

It was now a one-on-one fight to the death for the whole market – and the combined Express-News had the larger circulation and a significantly larger news staff.

"I think that probably was one of the last nails in the coffin," Kilpatrick said. "By then we had momentum. We never lost it after that."

Over the past decade The Light made change after change, and the Express-News responded to almost every one. Separate daily business and local news sections, expanded sports coverage, the police blotter page – all were ideas introduced by The Light and quickly copied by the Express-News.

"They were, by and large, learning from us," Rademaekers said. "They were able to do that, plus be the paper of record."

With its smaller staff, The Light was unable to match the Express-News story for story. So The Light picked its spots, going into crisis-management mode when a big story broke to equal or surpass the competition's coverage.

Warmbold died in 1989. But under Rademaekers, his successor, The Light continued to bring out new features, including "Insider" magazine, a belated attempt to counter the Star.

The Light expanded its business coverage of Mexico, opening a bureau in the northern city of Monterrey as the move for a North American free-trade agreement gathered momentum.

The paper also started LightLine, an automated phone-in information service, and Ticket, a weekend entertainment guide. Most recently, it added Flavor, a revamped weekly food section.

The Light continued to emphasize in-depth reporting, and many of its special-projects stories had a major impact on the community. A 1988 series helped persuade city officials to push for a new main library rather than merely remodel the old one.

The ambitious "A Thousand Lives" series examined what happened to Levi Strauss & Co. workers after their South Zarzamora Street plant closed in 1990. An expose of ticket-fixing led to a shake-up at Municipal Court.

This kind of journalism, and Rick Casey's front-page columns, forced civic leaders to pay attention to The Light. But the Express-News retained its lead.

"We got respect, but not circulation market share," Rademaekers said.

The Light tended to dominate the Express-News in terms of awards. But, perversely, that didn't do the paper much good, Wise said.

"The Light became kind of elitist," he said. "They got more and more conscious of producing this great newspaper that the journalism professors would adore."

> *We got respect, but not circulation market share.*
>
> **–ED RADEMAEKERS**
> Executive editor of The Light

While Light executives take special pride in ambitious projects such as "A Thousand Lives," Wise points to an Express-News piece about a local woman giving birth to quintuplets: "We just beat The Light's pants off with that story."

Jim Moss, who succeeded Wise as Express-News executive editor, attributes his paper's survival in part to its emphasis on spot news, including reports on crime and traffic accidents.

While The Light took a more features-oriented, in-depth approach, "We'll go with the spot news every time," Moss said.

But awards really were secondary to what The Light was trying to accomplish, said Deputy Managing Editor Robert Rivard.

"We began with the assumption that as San Antonio grew in size and diversity, so would its tastes and its needs, and we wanted to be the newspaper that accompanied readers through those changing times," he said.

"Our aim was to raise expectations in San Antonio, to demonstrate that The Light could take the major issues of the day – jobs lost overseas, the water crises, the school funding debate, the Mexico opening – and deliver in-depth journalism with a level of style and sophistication the city had never before experienced."

For most of the past century the ideal model of the mass-market newspaper has been steadily refined, to the point where every paper eventually was trying to do more or less the same things. That made the economically weaker newspapers redundant, and expendable.

Both local papers have been accused of distorting the city's image by focusing too much on crime news. Marbut notes that sometimes fierce competition can lead newspapers "to seek a lowest common denominator."

But in a blue-collar, heavily immigrant city such as San Antonio, newspapers that strive for the sophistication of the New York Times would turn off most readers, denying them the newspapers they want and need.

Hernandez, the community activist, remembers that for many Hispanic women of her mother's generation, the paper was a window into a new world.

"They learned English by reading The Light," she said. "They learned to read by reading The Light."

Newspapers such as The Light brought everyone together: The paper Hernandez's mother read was the same one delivered to Olmos Park.

That bond between the city's diverse neighborhoods may fray if other means of spreading information take root. But those are challenges for the Express-News to face.

In San Antonio, The Light is now yesterday's news, reduced to spools of microfilm tucked away in some archive drawer. What remains, an almost invisible legacy, is the sense of community it helped nurture.

Staff reporters Jerry Briggs and Pat Konstam contributed to this report.

Neon sign became landmark beacon for downtown

By MICHAEL PAULSON
Staff reporter

A San Antonio institution shuts down today, but it will leave a city landmark behind – at least for a little while.

The Light's landmark neon sign, which has illuminated the corner of Broadway and McCullough for 47 years, is expected to remain illuminated for the forseeable future, said Light Publisher George B. Irish.

"It has great sentimental value to an awful lot of people, and the last thing that will happen is that it will be dismantled," Irish said.

But the distinct Deco sign's long-term future, like that of the building on which it is mounted, is uncertain. Irish said he may suggest the Hearst Corp. donate the sign to a local museum.

The splashy, flashing beacon has been a giant announcement of the newspaper and its building: Starting about 15 feet above the sidewalk and rising another 20 feet, it is a simple red, white and blue during the day.

But at night, the sign is at its most glorious. "L-I-G-H-T" in a gigantic vertical advertisement below a smaller, horizontal display reading "THE SAN ANTONIO" – all flashing in pale blue, outlined by orange.

Atop it all sits a neon eagle – the Hearst Corp.'s emblem – featuring blue and green plumage.

The sign has become a downtown landmark, not only for employees but also for commuters and travelers. For southbound traffic on Broadway, the distant glow of the sign beckons people downtown.

"It's funky and historic and reminds me of the old movie marquees," said Roy Lowey-Ball, an architect and member of the city's Fine Arts Commission. "If we were to do it today, people would say it's gaudy and overdone, but it's historic, and I'd hate to see it go."

Eduardo Diaz, the city's director of arts and cultural affairs, compares the sign to the Hertzberg clock on Houston Street.

"It's one of those landmarks that people have become accustomed to and some people have become endeared of," Diaz said. "It's got a kind of Deco feel, which I like a lot, and it's kind of classic. Neon is now back in, but that sign never skipped a beat.

"In a time when there's this proliferation of messages and the public is bombarded with all kinds of hype and urban clutter, The Light's sign stands out as . . . an example of what good, responsible, communicative, stylish signage is," Diaz said.

The sign is considered remarkable because of its age, size and construction – it is one of the few porcelain enamel neon signs remaining in the city.

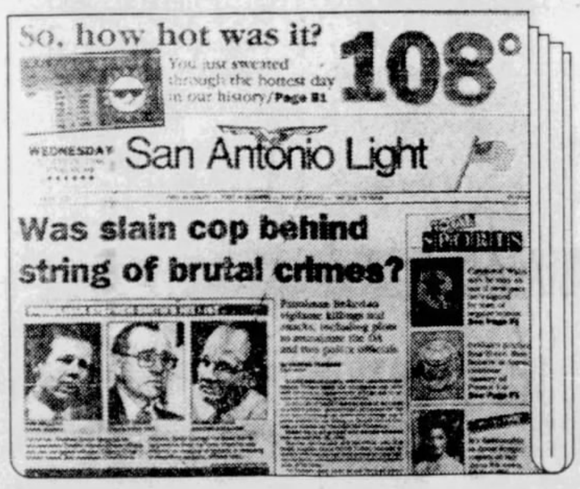
Powered by its own electrical circuit, it is illuminated from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. 365 days a year.

"That light is still just as bright and shiny as it was when it was installed," said Bill Crowell, 67, one of the General Neon Sign Co. workers who built the sign in 1946. "At that time, it probably cost around $7,500, but now it would cost over $20,000."

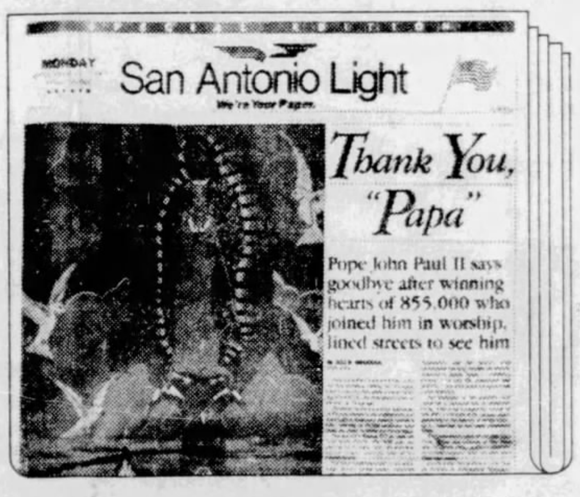
The sign is expected to be the target of collectors and preservationists, and even some nostalgic Light employees.

"I want that light – it's beautiful," said Paul Woods, The Light's assistant controller, who said he would modify his house to make room for it. "Long before I worked at The Light, I saw it and thought, 'That is a beautiful sign.' "

FRONT PAGES THROUGH THE YEARS


So, how hot was it? 108°
You just sweated through the hottest day in our history/Page 81
WEDNESDAY San Antonio Light
Was slain cop behind string of brutal crimes?
SPECIAL SPORTS

1986: The city recorded its hottest day in history, but the hottest story that day was the aftermath of the slaying of vigilante Officer Stephen Smith by fellow Officer Farrell Tucker.


MONDAY San Antonio Light
We're Your Paper.
Thank You, "Papa"
Pope John Paul II says goodbye after winning hearts of 855,000 who joined him in worship, lined streets to see him

1987: San Antonio said goodbye to Pope John Paul II after his historic visit. The Light marked his departure with a special edition on Sept. 14, 1987.

WEDNESDAY San Antonio Light
Earthquake!
■ 2nd-worst in U.S. history ■ Hundreds are killed, hurt
■ Part of Bay Bridge falls ■ Series Game 3 postponed

1989: Although thousands of miles away, The Light reacted quickly to the San Francisco earthquake. The Oct. 18, 1989, edition featured a special report.

THURSDAY San Antonio Light
SPECIAL REPORT
WAR
U.S. punishes Iraq
■ Bomb raids appear hugely successful
■ Iraqi air force 'decimated'
■ No major counterattack reported
■ Nuclear and chemical arsenals targeted
■ Saddam tries to rally people
■ Attack of Baghdad heard on TV
Bush: The world could wait no longer

1991: The Light was the first South Texas newspaper to send staffers to the Persian Gulf. When war broke out, the Jan. 17, 1991, edition carried large headlines and detailed graphics.

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

ED RADEMAEKERS

Time has come to say goodbye

So the time has come for the people of The San Antonio Light to say goodbye.

We've tried to do this in the only way we know how: by telling the story. The results are on the pages of this commemorative edition.

Throughout the edition, you will find individual and institutional attempts to make sense of all 112 brawling, sprawling San Antonio years and our place in them.

We were here before air conditioning. The typewriter had just been invented. When you spend enough time on the streets of San Antonio, you develop some character. And quite a character it was, The San Antonio Light that I walked into in March of 1982 as managing editor. The guy previous to me had been hounded out of town by Express-News columnist Paul Thompson, who exposed the editor's habit of putting I-10 massages on his credit card. It was my idea of the perfect job: the only way was up.

Up and out, as things developed. Now, carrying the title of the Last Editor, it becomes my job to define what this newspaper was, this survivor to nearly the end of America's newspaper wars.

So many people have tried to take a stab at defining this newspaper's meaning and role. I remember the news editor from across the street who, seeking a job here, told me that the problem with The Light was that it was anti-gun and pro-gay. I wished I had the presence and the power to arrange a mugging on Main Street.

But my colleague had a point. The Light was, by the mid-80s, allowing arguments about ways to end the violence in our streets to make print. And we bought the argument that our readers come in different colors and sexes and persuasions and that all deserve to learn about each groups' foibles, accomplishments and needs.

What we tried to do was to allow all of the city's competing factions to have a voice. That is what a city's newspaper ought to be about.

What's missing in this final edition, what we cannot adequately convey is the thanks we owe to all those readers and advertisers – lawyer and politician, merchant, grocer and car dealer, retired military, kicker, senior citizen, Trinity student, Kelly worker. Thanks for supporting us for so long, when so many wealthier cities had years ago decided they could get along with one newspaper.

And thanks should go also to the reporters who put the words together, the photographers and artists who gave us the images and the copy editors who each night pounded this mass of stats and sorrow, laughter and outrage into shape.

While we worked here, we watched the rules change. We welcomed our military back from the Cold War and went with them to the Persian Gulf. Women and Mexican Americans gained power in our newsroom and in the shaping of the news. We lost our editor to AIDS.

We watched, along with the rest of America, the Challenger go down. Then we watched it again and again on TV, each replay reinforcing a vague sense of our growing irrelevance as a presenter of global events.

We took a new and deeper look around us and to places that TV wasn't going. We looked to a fresh lineup of columnists, like Casey and Guerra, Yerkes and Harvey, for insight and wit. We put a bureau in Monterrey and brought business news from Mexico back here.

We were boosters. For a year the All-America city logo graced our front pages. We supported the building of the dome, the building of the library, the rewriting of our water laws and the reallocation of our education money.

We sometimes pandered, selling newspapers on the blood our readers spilled. And we didn't blush when the opportunity came along to present the Insider or the police blotter.

We wanted our readers to have some fun. So we brought you one of the most complete sports sections in the country; Ticket, so you could plan your weekend a little earlier; and a TV book that set a standard for dozens of other newspapers.

We were a pain in the butt. Only the San Antonio Light could pave the way for the defeat of a congressman by running a photo of his mansion and then infuriate the victor by detailing his employer's ethical lapse.

In all this we were supported by our publisher, George B. Irish, and long after it became profitable to do so, by the Hearst Corp.

We in the newsroom owe them thanks, too. Goodbye.

Ed Rademaekers is editor of The Light.

IN OUR VIEW

After hard-fought battle, The Light goes out

Adios, San Antonio. With today's edition, The Light goes out. That ends a 112-year relationship between this newspaper and this city.

The past few months, since our readers learned of our potential demise, have been bittersweet. We have learned how much The Light has been a part of the lives of generations of families in this community. Some people have grown up with this newspaper, never remembering a day without it. The Light has followed some off to college, to war, to stints of service abroad, bringing news of home.

The paper has sought to inform, to entertain, even to amuse. When it has been successful, it has been an integral part of the lives of its readers. It has sought to be a part of the life of the larger community as well, evolving even as the community has evolved.

San Antonio justly takes pride in its diversity, in its harmony, in the way government has become increasingly open to the voices that share in the community's future.

Like the city, the newspaper has not been perfect in this regard. But, at its best, The Light has sought to be more inclusive, to welcome diverse voices, sometimes to be the voice for those with no other voice. Even when it has fallen short, that has been the ideal to which it has aspired.

The past decade has been a meaningful period in The Light's evolution. In both appearance and content, it has sought to move toward the new century, a century it will not see. As more potential readers have turned to television for their news, The Light has attempted to become more graphically attractive, more readable.

It has attempted to keep its readers informed on state, national and international events, always remembering that its unique contribution and its primary mission is to report on the life of the city in which it resides.

In myriad ways, the newspaper has been a part of the life of the community – even beyond its traditional role of reporting and commenting on the news. It has supported worthy causes, providing both volunteers and dollars to advance community efforts.

It has reached out into the community, drawing advisers from all parts of San Antonio to serve on its community advisory board.

Its doors have been open to welcome all kinds of groups that have a cause or a concern to bring before its editorial board.

For the past four years, the newspaper has become involved in openly attempting to help set the community's agenda.

Some of our readers find The Light too conservative, others too liberal. But we have attempted to deliver on a promise to present a variety of points of view and an honest opinion on topics of importance to citizens here.

For all these efforts, however, those who follow trends in the newspaper industry could not have found the October announcement of the impending closure of The Light to be an unexpected development.

Throughout the nation, cities have not been able to sustain two competing daily newspapers.

Usually, as in San Antonio, the traditional afternoon newspaper does not survive.

San Antonio has been the site of one of the last great newspaper battles. That hard-fought war has had both its high points and its low moments. Both winner and loser can take pride in many accomplishments.

In the early days of mass communications, when newspaper dispatches traveled by telegraph, the symbol -30- was used to signify the end of the dispatch. In the newspaper world, the symbol has widely come to mean "the end."

An early Shirley Temple film appropriated the term when one of the characters said goodbye: "OK, 30 for now."

So to our readers we say, "It's been quite a ride – 30 for now."

CARLOS GUERRA

Thanks for putting me in the hot seat

I'm going to miss having a choice of newspapers, and I'm especially going to miss having someplace to go every day.

Ditto for a regular paycheck, and double-ditto for the finest collection of co-workers on the face of this earth.

In my short stint on the front page of The Light, I have listened to many a common man's tale of woe, and spent a lot of time staring into a computer screen while scrunching my shoulder to hold a phone.

I have chased more than a few slippery public servants, trying to extract public information they wanted to keep private. I've infuriated some of our city's most powerful people by spilling the beans on how our money is sometimes spent to help out just a few of us.

It has been a great experience.

But best of all, I have learned extraordinary things from some truly extraordinary individuals, people who were and remain largely unknown but whose stories affected a far wider circle.

It has been ordinary, private people who shared with me some of the best stories I wrote. I salute them for their courage, and thank them for thinking of me.

Filling my space three days a week has been, for the most part, a great privilege, one that I have taken quite seriously.

Although I have always been irked by the tags "first Latino" and "only Latino," I thank the management of The Light for trusting me enough to make me the first and only Latino front-page columnist writing for any major paper in the United States.

I thank them for affording me great visibility and for giving me the freedom of expression few people will ever enjoy.

When the pressure was on, they supported me.

I do bemoan the fact that I am the "first and only." And I especially bemoan the fact that it wasn't until September 1991 that I became the "first and only."

As much as I would like to, I won't ever shed the "first" tag. But I can't wait to stop being the "only."

I thank The Light for giving me the opportunity to sit on this hot seat, sling an arrow or two, and occasionally provide some insight that otherwise might not seen the light of day.

I never attempted to be a spokesman for Latinos, Mexican-Americans, Chicanos, straights, males, bald-headed people, people in their 40s, conjunto music aficionados or any other group to which I belong.

I simply wrote about what I had lived, what I knew, and what I had learned.

Seeking to write for the average worker who rides a bus to work – a readership that still is poorly served – I found that they are hardly as uneducated, uninformed or gullible as many elected and self-appointed leaders in this community think.

I was humbled by the enormous response my musings generated, and regularly surprised by the support my positions garnered.

There are some things I won't miss about this job, including the daily messages on my voice mail from racists – always anonymous – whining in comically mangled English about the special breaks supposedly given to minorities.

And I won't miss the saccharine-voiced public relations flacks, pestering me for favorable stories about their clients.

I've already forgotten the many "juicy tips" about the personal peccadillos of politicians thoughtfully communicated – with great secrecy – by their opponents.

But there are many things I will miss.

I will miss the wisdom shared by literally hundreds of people who bothered to call in support or to dispute some point, or to question some conclusion.

I will miss the elderly people who insisted on calling me "Mr. Guerra" as they said they didn't agree with much of what I wrote but were glad I wrote it anyway. It is hard to disagree with them; differences of opinion are what make this country great.

I also will miss working in the most diverse and tolerant newsroom I have ever known, one where Spanish was spoken so widely and regularly that no one paid attention to the fact.

The Light for several years maintained the highest percentage of Latino writers of any major daily in the United States, and an unusually large number of the non-Latinos at The Light speak varying amounts of Spanish and other languages.

But most telling is that Latino writers at The Light were never expected to write about Latino issues or for Latino audiences. Instead, we were encouraged to use the perspective given by our life experiences to enhance and broaden The Light's coverage of all issues.

This attitude contributed greatly to making The Light a special paper for many in our city.

If The Light is lost, I hope that message isn't.

SUSAN YERKES

Let's just call it the last hurrah

When Ed Rademaekers offered me this job in early 1986, he told me to just "have fun with it."

Fun, to Rads, could mean covering anything from City Council to a three-ring circus. (Occasionally indistinguishable from each other.)

To see you off in familiar style, I've pulled out few photos from columns gone by, when I couldn't resist the urge to get in the spirit.

The joy of writing about this city and its people have been swelled by the joy of participating.

I had fun with the circus, and with City Council meetings. My legs ached from riding an elephant, my ears ached from listening to hot tips, and I ached elsewhere from sitting through meetings.

You sent me to Mexico for President Salinas' inauguration, and to Washington for President Bush's and President Clinton's far more pomp-filled events. To Austin, to Laredo, to Corpus Christi and New Braunfels – but mostly here all around San Antonio. Always looking for the fun in Texas life.

You made me the second-ever Mud Queen, MQII. (*Your Mud Queen*, to match *Your Paper.*)

You sent me to learn the serious side in Leadership San Antonio, where I found new friends and new concerns in all parts of town.

You sent me to the Majestic Theater, and I came back the cattiest columnist around.

Dressing up, cutting up, dishing politics or taking tips on the phone; my mission has been to convey that sense of SA's spirit to you readers. Sometimes wry, sometimes interesting. And you have given back.

Through the column, friends have been reunited, lost property has been returned, and lives have touched. One of my dearest memories is of a woman who called to thank me for an item. I had run an excerpt from a charming parody of "The Night Before Christmas" that she and her husband wrote many years ago.

She called a week or two after the item was published. Her husband had died during the holidays, she said, "But the story was printed the day before he died. He was so pleased."

Most people, the newspaper axiom goes, have their names in the paper twice – when they're born and when they die. One of the greatest joys of this job has been getting to know folks from all the segments and strata that make up SA, while they're very much alive. Every one of us has some story to tell. It's been my privilege to hear some great ones. Including many I never could, or would, print.

Another joy has been meeting really amazing people. One was Lady Bird Johnson, whom I interviewed just before her 80th birthday, late last year. The interview was hard to arrange, because the former first lady is well-insulated by her devoted staff. Finally, I asked an SA friend who knows Lady Bird and her best friend, Liz Carpenter, to intervene. When the interview came through, I called to thank my friend.

"Well," she drawled, "I just told Liz that I really thought it would be good if Mrs. Johnson would do this, since it could be the last hurrah."

"And Liz said, 'Why, *I* don't think it's the *last hurrah!*'

"I said 'Liz, I don't *mean* the last hurrah for Mrs. Johnson. I mean the last hurrah for The Light.' " And the interview was granted.

No matter how long you have to get used to the idea, breaking up is hard to do. The Light means more than a job to me and many others. The death of this paper means the death of my extended family; the loss of cherished friends.

Thanks to all of them, and all of you, for the memories. I've had six years of year-round Fiesta, and that's more than many people can say.

Woody Allen (who had his own problems in '92), put it this way: "It's not that I'm afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens."

I hate to be here when The Light goes out. But I would never, *never* miss the last hurrah. Cheers!

CHRONOLOGY

1865: The first edition of the Express is published.

1883: The Evening Light is sold to brothers Thomas Benton Johnson, Charles Johnson and Benjamin Johnson and becomes the Daily Light.

1909: The Daily Light is sold to George D. Robbins and becomes the San Antonio Light and Gazette.

1918: The first edition of the News is published.

1973: Australian media magnate Rupert Murdoch buys the morning Express and afternoon News, beginning the battle in earnest.

1984: Murdoch merges the Express and the News into a single, all-day newspaper, which retains its circulation lead over The Light.

1986: The Light launches TotalSports, an enlarged sports section.

1990: The Insider, The Light's version of a gossip tabloid, debuts as The Light tries to neutralize the attraction of the Star.

Oct. 6, 1992: The Hearst Corp. announces plans to buy the Express-News. If no buyer is found, The Light will be closed.

January 20, 1881: The first edition of the San Antonio Evening Light is published by James P. Newcomb.

1906: The Daily Light is sold to E.B. Chandler.

1911: The San Antonio Light and Gazette is sold to Charles Sanford Diehl and Harrison L. Beach and becomes the San Antonio Light.

1924: The San Antonio Light is bought by William Randolph Hearst.

1974: The Sunday Express-News begins offering the Star, a tabloid gossip magazine.

1981: The Express begins Wingo, a numbers game that proves phenomenally popular among readers. The Light begins its transition to a morning newspaper, while still publishing an afternoon edition. But it loses its lead on Sundays, and the morning Express retains its circulation advantage.

1989: The Light begins Loteria, a numbers game intended to counter the popularity of Wingo.

1991: The Light opens a bureau in Monterrey, Mexico, to intensify its coverage of commerce with Mexico in anticipation of a free-trade agreement.

Jan. 27, 1993: The Light is published for the last time.

San Antonio Light
A LOOK BACK

We touched many lives

Newspaper's demise is hard on readers, employees and city

THE FINAL DECISION: Geroge B. Irish, publisher of The Light, addresses employees in the second floor newsroom Jan. 27. Irish announced The Light would be closed after 112 years.

Continued from page 1

Just 18 months earlier, The Light had trimmed payroll by laying off or offering retirement incentives to about 10 percent of its employees. Recently, it had made product improvements such as the Flavor food section, landed an exclusive advertising contract with grocery giant H-E-B, and showed off its journalistic talent with comprehensive coverage of the international drug summit.

After losing money for the past five years, The Light was supposed to be edging toward breaking even again. Then, in one sentence, all became moot.

For those inclined to clutch at the hope of a sale, the statement offered scant encouragement. The Light had lost $60 million since 1987, it said. The corporation had concluded the losses were irreversible.

Over the next few hours, throughout each of the five floors and the adjacent press building, swells of fear, anxiety, anger and disorientation rose and fell, often arriving in quick succession and punctuated by gallows humor.

Outside San Antonio, the story was news for only a day, one Associated Press cycle. In recessionary times, how much fuss can one make over another 620 jobs?

Of course it was much bigger news in San Antonio, where those 620 jobs and the money paid to 800 or so independent contractors translated into a yearly payroll in the millions.

"I suspect there are people who are benefitting from The Light's economic impact on the city who aren't even aware of it," said Joe Krier, president of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

> *I suspect there are people who are benefitting from The Light's economic impact on the city who aren't even aware of it.*
>
> **–JOE KRIER**
> President of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

As a consumer, The Light created business for advertising firms, PR agencies, printing ink suppliers and so on. As a philanthropist, the newspaper and its employees were responsible for almost $800,000 in annual donations. The loss will be substantial.

The demise of a newspaper, however, is greater than the sum of its economic impact. Unlike a rendering plant or a department store, a newspaper is not a narrowly defined corporate entity. It has a voice, and therefore a personality.

Through its words and, perhaps more important, its attitude, it touches lives in ways no accountant can calculate.

No one who enjoys sitting down with the day's paper will dispute its value. But pitted against the economic forces stressing the newspaper industry, that does not mean much. Competition is not just spirited, but lethal. Time was when major cities all had several papers. Now San Antonio, like most, can afford only one.

"We did all the right things," said Light Publisher George B. Irish. "It simply wasn't ours to be had. We lost to that phenomenon of (dying) two-newspaper towns."

The inclination for many of us who work at the paper is to rage against the dying of The Light. The city deserves better. So do our readers. So do we.

Today we spend a few of our last pages trying to convey what this loss will mean to the people at The Light and the people who read it. We don't claim to be completely objective about it. For once we do not have to be.

"I knew Frank Bennack's father when I was growing up, and Frank Bennack was on our board of trustees out here. The Light has always been supportive of this university in terms of its educational programs, and we will lose that support. This is sort of like a death in the family."

– Sister Elizabeth Ann Sueltenfuss, president of Our Lady of the Lake University.

To those standing in the back of the room, Bennack's words were almost inaudible. So the news was passed back, sloppily, like water in a bucket brigade.

Surely, Mickey Urias thought, *this must have gotten screwed up getting back to us. This cannot be true.*

Just the day before, Urias, a 33-year-old secretary in the classified advertising department, had been thumbing through a course catalog from Incarnate Word College, thinking about enrolling again for night courses in January.

"That must have been an omen," she said.

Tears flowed when she and her co-workers got back to their office, still unsure of what they had heard. One of Urias' colleagues was married to a man who also worked at the newspaper. All sat around in shock, asking questions for which they had no answers. It was hard to pay attention to the telephones.

As the shock wore off, there were plenty of feelings waiting to rush in.

"You go from crying to being so (mad) you could put your fist through a wall," she said. "We try to understand why things happened the way they did, but there's all those emotions there."

Why had things happened this way?

It is a question she will wrestle with for years, until memories fade and wounds heal and it all seems like ancient history. In the meantime – and it promises to be a very mean time – she must begin dealing with a sense of loss that is enormous.

"A lot of us (in classified) really grew up together here," she said. "We all delivered our children at about the same time. Our children know each other. You definitely bond with each other."

Urias started at The Light 10 years ago. She was pregnant, her husband had been laid off, and she needed a little extra money. She grew fond of the company and returned following the birth of her child.

She recently had her second baby. For the near future she plans to stay home. Beyond that, she has not thought much.

"My future is very much in the dark. But I'm more worried about other people than myself. I'm finally to the point where I can take some time off. I'm worried for the people who are so nervous right now they can't keep food down, people whose future is so much more uncertain than mine.

"Your whole life is changed," she said. "There is a whole range of things you've got to juggle ... I refuse to let myself get sick over the matter, though I'm not condemning those people who are shaking in their boots.

"You've got to remember, we've got people who graduated from high school and went to work immediately for The Light and have been here 15, 17 years."

Urias is saddened not only by the severing of so many relationships, but also by the physical loss of the paper she grew up reading.

"I thought one paper would go under, but I never thought it would be ours," she said. "Everybody I talk to is such a Light fan. It seemed like it was such a quality paper that it would endure."

"On one level it's a personal sadness because I grew up on The Light, starting with the funny pages. In my sons' early years, I helped them read, starting with sports and wrestling and moving on to the Metro section. They really cut their teeth on The Light. For me, it's a question of loyalty.

"The other thing The Light has had (for me) is a sensitivity to Mexican-Americans ... I believe the staff at The Light made every effort to bring on minority guest writers and hired many minority reporters themselves. Not only that, but their non-minority staff really tried to understand issues and different cultural components of the community. I hope we don't lose that to the downsizing to a one-newspaper town.

"If we are reduced to one point of view and one kind of lens, if we are reduced to not having to critique ourselves, I fear ... we will lack motivation to look at deep and serious problems in the community."

– Rosie Castro, community activist

War is a barely exaggerated metaphor for the competition between two newspapers. The struggle is not just for dominance, but for survival.

As always, the ones feeling the struggle most intensely are the soldiers. Dee Dee Crockett and Debbie Rodgers had no say over strategies, but they were counted on to bring in advertising revenue even in the face of lagging circulation.

"Every day we came in, we thought, 'What are we doing to help win the war?' " Crockett said. "To me it was a cause, a total commitment. Staying at The Light, knowing that one day one of the papers would close, you really bought into the fact that you were here for a reason. What you did made a difference."

Crockett and Rodgers handled the food accounts, Crockett the local ones and Rodgers the national companies. Even in retrospect they could find no hint of looming disaster. To the contrary, they had felt they were winning the war until Bennack made his announcement a few feet from their desks.

"I was crushed," said Crockett, a 34-year-old native of Donna who began at The Light in 1983. "I lived, breathed and ate The Light. I know I'll find a job, but probably not one I love as much as this one."

As Crockett began to cry, Rodgers, 31, described the satisfaction the two gained from achieving success in the face of several years of adversity.

"This has stretched our character, stretched our ability," she said. "Any person with any character is going to be stretched by meeting these obstacles. There is an incredible amount of satisfaction and growth in that."

Rodgers is a fifth-generation San Antonian whose family had always subscribed to The Light. Like Crockett, she knows she might have to leave town to find a job she wants. She did it once before, right after college.

She would go regretfully this time, but without anger.

"I can't believe we worked this hard and it came to this," Rodgers said. "What a twist, this ending. But I chose to work here. I'm not a victim. I did very well here. I'm better for having been here.

"I've reconciled myself (to the company's actions). Is being this loyal to a company worth the possibility of being betrayed? Yes. I'd do it again."

> *Staying at The Light, knowing that one day one of the papers would close, you really bought into the fact that you were here for a reason.*
>
> **–DEE DEE CROCKETT**
> Light advertising representative

"Of course you lose the competitive aspect you like to have in any venture. While there will be competition from the broadcast media, there's no real competition that drives you to break stories and to probe issues in depth.

"What could derive from the loss of competition positively? You do have the opportunity to build a world-class newspaper. It will require resources early on. It requires a decision early-on about the talent available at The Light. Will (the Express-News) build itself up staff-wise or will they go strictly for the profits? It all depends on Hearst.

"One obvious difference I've noticed (between the two papers), particularly in the last five years, is that The Light does more probing of city government ... The Light has a somewhat different philosophy about the things it thinks are important, like the Levi's plant closing, which it wrote about for a long time, like a dog that's gotten hold of a pants leg."

– Nelson Wolff, mayor of San Antonio

If there was a constant in the newsroom in recent years, it was change. The product that rolled off the presses for the last time today bears little resemblance to its namesake just a generation ago.

The changes were driven by competition. There was a perceived need to update, to modernize, definitely to improve. Some of the changes were successful, others less so. In the middle of several of them was Executive News Editor Mary Ann Horne.

She feels proudest of the paper's daily feature section, Viva, which she helped move from a traditional format to a tabloid during her tenure as features editor.

Horne came to The Light from North Carolina eight years ago. The fit was a natural. She saw herself as a warrior in need of a good fight.

"I wanted to fight a newspaper war," Horne said. "I had a really good job at the Charlotte Observer, but there wasn't anything I wanted to do more than work in a town with competing newspapers. I wanted to win.

"I feel like we did win, but I lost my job in the process," she said as tears welled up. "This place is just so special. I really loved it here.

"Even knowing what I know now, I wouldn't change a thing."

Among the few painful memories will be the death of Editor Ted Warmbold, who died of an AIDS-related disease in 1989.

"I admired that man," Horne said. "He was a great motivator."

She stopped momentarily, gazed across the newsroom and wept softly.

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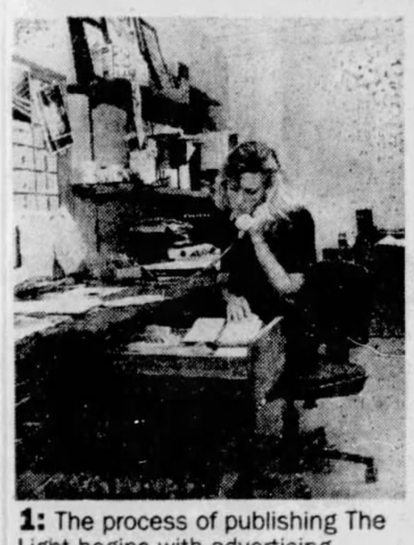
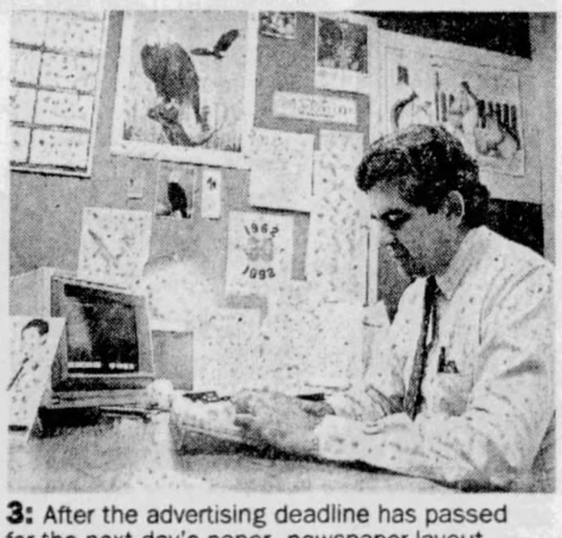
THE MAKING OF A NEWSPAPER



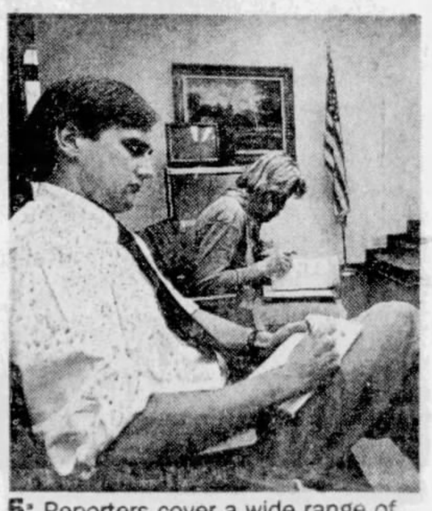
1: The process of publishing The Light begins with advertising. Here, Debbie Rodgers talks with a potential client to sell ad space.

2: Once advertising space is purchased, Marcelino Villanueva of creative services and advertising art supervisor Luciano Arredondo create the ad.



3: After the advertising deadline has passed for the next day's paper, newspaper layout manager Eduardo Alvarez del Castillo decides where each will appear in the paper.

4: News, commentary and art is the second key element of The Light. Light photographer Andy King zooms in on a shot that will be in the next day's paper.



5: Reporters cover a wide range of events, and some even specialize in certain areas or "beats." Doug Holt covers City Hall.

San An

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HISTORIC MOMENT: Hundreds of San Antonio Light employees gather for a panoramic photo in front of the newspaper's offices at Broadway and McCullough. The photo, taken by the Goldbeck company, ga

Continued from previous page

"I told my mother that this feels like a funeral with an open casket for two months," she said shortly after Bennack's announcement. "I told her that if she could imagine that, then she could begin to understand what I'm going through right now."

"My real problem with one paper in town is that if I have a real deep-rooted disagreement and I feel like there's a lot of people that share in that disagreement with the newspaper's position, we won't have any place else to go. The market will be closed.

"The editorial boards that expressed opinions on many things about our future have been . . . mostly male, mostly White, and they had old ideas. What the San Antonio Light did was to attempt to at least reconcile that somewhat by having an advisory board meet with top staff every so often."

– Joe Bernal, former state senator, retired assistant superintendent, Harlandale School District

Tom Talley devoted more than half his life to The Light. An avid collector of antique clocks, his small office everywhere bears signs of the passage of time.

Most notable is a wooden nameplate that sits at the far end of his desk. The letters are backwards, set by hand in the way newspaper type was set before the advent of computers.

"I was a baby, 23 years old and straight out of San Antonio College when I started," said the 56-year-old Talley. "I don't think I ever thought about how long I was going to be here."

The job soon took on a larger meaning as Talley rose to become advertising operations manager for special products such as Light Plus, Fiesta magazine and Best Homes. Talley recalled the many changes he has helped guide the paper through.

"I can still remember selling Joske's an ad for a special section at $2.36 per inch. Now that price is up in the 30s," he said. "A lot of time has gone by. But this has been such fun. It was good work, it took imagination, creativity and hard work. I enjoyed it."

After 33 years at the paper, news of The Light's closure hit hard.

"I think what is even more painful is that I felt we were doing a lot of things right," he said. "To me, it is distressing to have helped put out a good product, a family-type newspaper that was well done, well written and well represented.

"It seemed like that is what people would want. Well, maybe it wasn't."

Talley has seen the closure of many advertisers throughout his career – Joske's, The Vogue, Frost Bros. – but the day The Light closed was destined to be the most painful.

"After spending all my working life here, I'll probably shake some hands and leave with a lot of memories," he said. "Hell, I might even cry. Who knows?"

"The Light has represented vision and leadership in this community for so many years. As I drive around San Antonio and look at what the city is today, you can't drive very far without seeing projects that The Light was instrumental in seeing . . . done. I just look at it as a tragic loss.

"We understand that no business can operate unless it is making a profit or has reasonable opportunity to make a profit in the near future. (But) that doesn't abrogate the very real loss that a commmunity has when it loses a voice and the . . . leadership of an entity like The Light.

"You've done many things that I disagree with, you have taken stands on issues that I disagree with, you have made reports about me personally and my business activities that I disagree with. But all of that notwithstanding, the scales are balanced strongly to the side of benefit that this community receives from The Light. Any benefit the community receives also is a benefit to me."

– Red McCombs, auto dealer and majority owner of the Spurs

As James McGarity put it, the newspaper business seemed like one that had no holidays. As long as there was news, there would be a newspaper. And there would always be news.

"I felt it was safe forever," said McGarity, assistant press foreman.

McGarity arrived at The Light in 1956, fresh off the farm outside of Luling where he was raised. He started as a paper handler, loading the huge rolls of newsprint onto the presses. Now he is 55, an age that puts him "between the rock and the hard place." He's too young to retire – not that he wants to – but too old to be confident of finding a good job right away.

His wife is disabled and on dialysis. His seven children are grown, but he is raising a 14-year-old granddaughter.

"I'm not really scared," he said. "I'm kind of a religious guy, and I believe I will be taken care of. God will take care of me."

"We are losing not necessarily a friend, but an objective paper that gives our issues the same validity, the same importance as it does other segments of San Antonio. The Light reaches out to every segment community. I hope our minority comm is aware that it's not going to be like i to be, and we're going to suffer."

– John Sanders, East Side ac

Sonia Gutierrez still gets teased abo day 12 years ago when she came in fo interview at The Light.

Newly arrived in San Antonio, Guti still a teen-ager, had her father driv downtown for the interview.

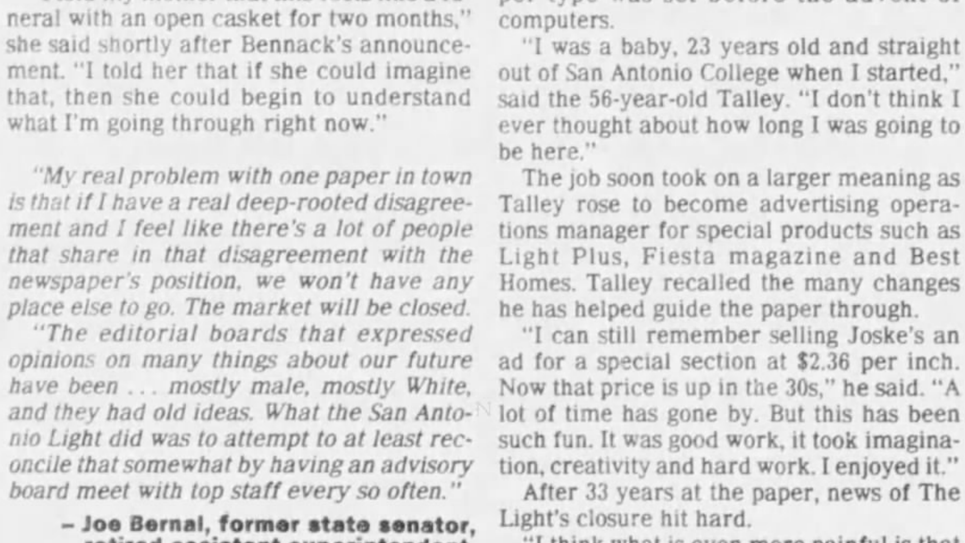
"I didn't know my way around town, drove me here and sat in the reception during the interview," she said. "A wards, I was asked, 'Who is that ma there?' and I had to confess it was n ther. Nobody lets me forget it."

Gutierrez, 31, designed the paper's a tising make-up, determining the numb pages and where the ads were placed number of stories to be run and lengths were then decided by editors considering the ads on a page.

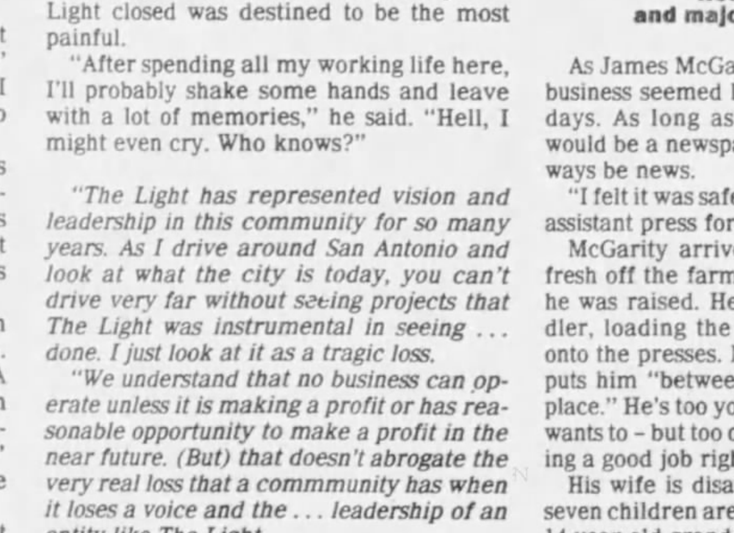
Her job often made her the target of editors, who can never have enough for stories.

"Deadline, deadline, deadline, what this job is all about," she said. "If is any kind of a disaster late in the day have to redo the paper. There are so

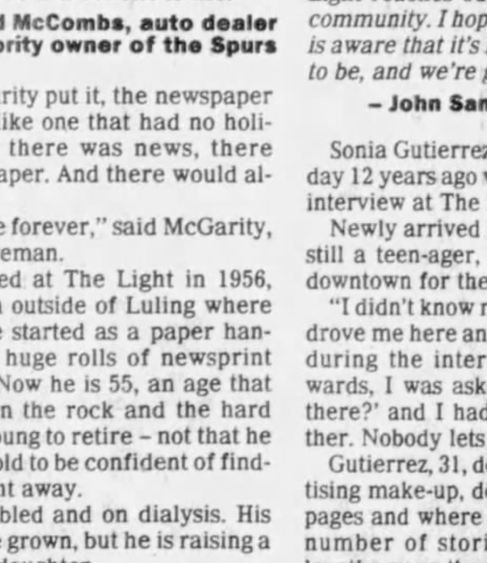
THE MAKING OF A NEWSPAPER



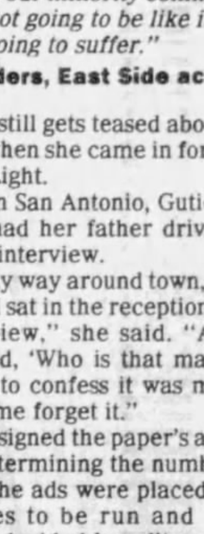
6: Once the story is turned in, it goes to the city desk, where editors, including assistant city editor O'Lene Stone, read the story to make sure it has all the necessary information and tells all sides of the story. If anything is missing, the story is sent back to the reporter for revision.



7: Each day, the city desk and other departments prepare a summary, or "budget," of their stories. These are reviewed in a meeting by the paper's key editors, who decide how the stories and art will be presented in the next day's paper.



8: All stories are read by copy editors, including Ken Green of the sports department, who double-check for accuracy and libel and write headlines.



9: The stories and composing room, onto the pages by Aguilera, who follo

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LOOK BACK

GOLDBECK PHOTOGRAPHY

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things that can happen, and there is always the deadline."

Her job was a roller coaster ride, with many unexpected dips and turns. Demanding as it was, Gutierrez enjoyed it.

"I thought I'd be here forever," she said. "I thought I would retire here. "When I first heard the news, I was shocked. I didn't believe it at first.

"I'm divorced and that is what this feels like – going through a divorce, except your ex-husband you might see again, and the paper, you're never going to see it again."

Gutierrez realizes she has to go on, for herself and her 10-year-old son, Juan. She dreams of returning to school and becoming a nurse.

"I plan to take some time off and regroup," she said. "I think I'll be OK. It's my son I'm worried about because all of this has an effect on him, too.

"The other day, I borrowed $2 from him and he said, 'It's OK mom, you don't have to pay me back.' It's hard. It's his life, too."

"Over the last several years, my habit of reading the paper has changed. I reach first for the business section when I pick up The Light . . . Expanded coverage of Mexico has been a distinctive difference. I will have to look for ways to fill that need some other way in the future."

– T.C. Frost, chairman, Frost National Bank

The downside to San Antonio's newspaper war was obvious: Red ink. Lots of it.

But from the readers' perspective there was an advantage. The newspapers were better, and certainly more attentive than they otherwise might have been.

That has meant stories that may never have appeared or been developed as extensively without competition. Last year's series in the Express-News on abuses by psychiatric hospitals is a case in point. Recent examples from The Light include:

- Reports on ticket fixing in municipal court that resulted in a wholesale shakeup.
- A series on the public library that was instrumental in building support for a major bond project.
- Stories on ethical questions about former District Attorney Fred Rodriguez that played a role in his defeat by Steve Hilbig.
- Rick Casey's columns on City Council's unwitting approval of an expensive police contract that helped spur anti-council sentiment, culminating in voter approval of term limitations.

A consistent tribute to the benefit of competition was found in the sports departments, which in the 1980s grew from a few pages to comprehensive sections.

The Light led the way in expanded sports news in San Antonio, and writer Brad Townsend played a significant part in that. He recalls with pride the amount of time he put in to raise the level of high school coverage, the thousands of miles he put on his car covering the Southwest Conference.

For the past three years, Townsend has handled the Spurs beat, which taught him the value of frequent flyer miles and the meaning of "professional" athlete.

"If there's one thing I've learned covering the Spurs, it's that everybody is replaceable," he said. "I've seen dozens of players come and go.

"Now I'm one of them. It's a strange feeling, especially to be 31 and not know if you're going to be able to stay in the business. Being a journalist probably has prepared me to do a lot of things. But how do I prove that to a prospective employer in another field?"

A lifelong San Antonian and graduate of Lee High School – his "Mr. Basketball" trophy is still in the trophy case outside the main gym – Townsend has watched other sportswriters, friends of his, labor to find jobs in a shrinking industry. He wonders if he will end up like them.

"In the 1980s, sports was the thing to be in," he said. "Staffs were expanding, travel budgets were expanding. At that time you could jump from one paper to another.

"You can't do that anymore. Now the bottom line for me is to find a job at a paper that's not going to fold. I guess I'd have to say I'm a little scared. My girlfriend was laid off a couple of months ago. We're some kind of couple."

"We were poor growing up. This was the great depression, and there were many things we did not have. But we had always had The Light. The Light has been a beacon, a bulwark . . . We are just sick at heart. There are so many things I remember. The column that Bishop Fulton Sheen wrote when John F. Kennedy died. The fact-finding trips that Bob Considine and (William Randolph) Hearst (Jr.) made to Russia. We were brought up with The Light. I can't see why there hasn't been an outcry over this. Subscribe to the Express? It's unthinkable."

– Cecilia Ackward, Light reader

Nat Palencia worked in The Light's mail room for nearly 17 years. He never did understand why it is called a mail room. There were no box slots or bundles of unopended mail on the cavernous floor waiting to be sorted.

Instead there was the steady, loud drum of machinery – big, heavy equipment that Palencia operated and maintained.

A mailer's job is to feed coupons and other pre-printed advertising supplements into the machine, which in turn inserts the items into the paper.

"When the press runs, we make sure you get nice, neat bundles," Palencia explained. "Every ad you get inside your comics, society or classified section, the machine inserts. My job is mostly to do preventive maintenance on the equipment, make sure it is in tip-top shape."

It was a job in which the 41-year-old Palencia invested a personal responsibility.

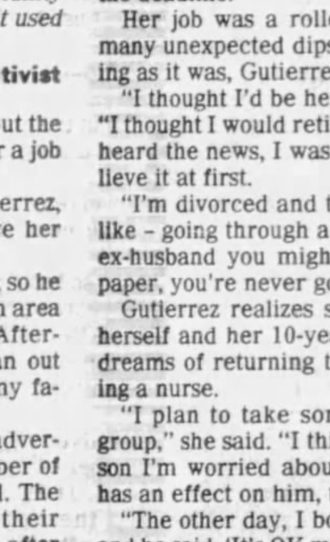
"It's like they are mine," he said. "I'm always cleaning them and taking care of them so that if somebody takes over, I want them to come in here and say, 'God, these machines are in good shape.' "

Even when the closing of The Light seemed imminent, he said he and his coworkers did not slack off.

"Everybody is trying to continue to do the best," he said. "We're not giving up on the paper. The paper gave up on us."

Staff reporters Ashley Blaker and Suzanne McAuliffe contributed to this report.

THE MAKING OF A NEWSPAPER



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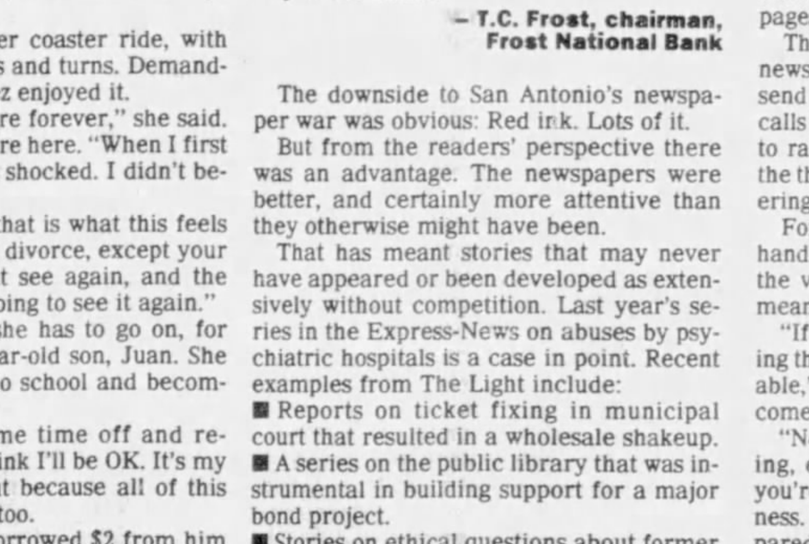
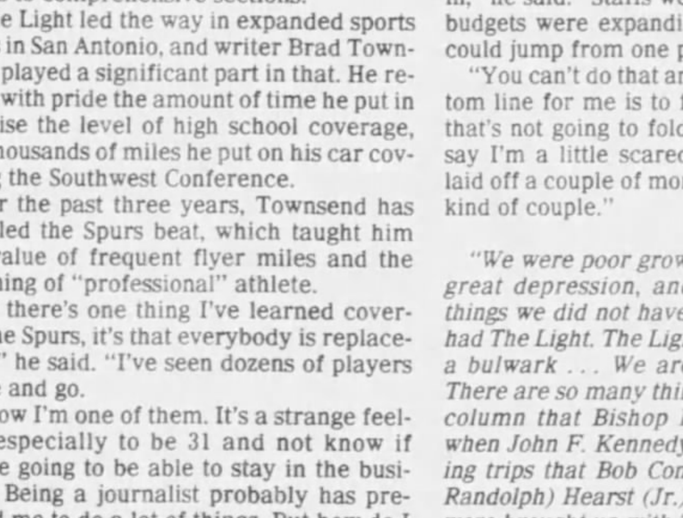
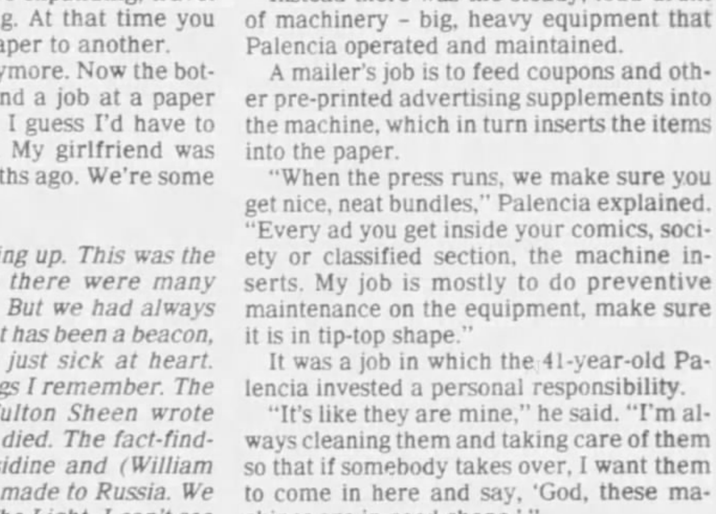


10: Renee Nixon and Al Maldonado, who work in the engraving department, make negatives of the pages. The negatives then go to the plate room, where the image is shot onto metal sheets, causing a special coating to raise up, forming the press plate.



11: Once a plate has been made for every page, they are attached to the press and the press run begins. A normal press run at The Light takes from 2 to 2½ hours. The Sunday morning press run takes 2½ to 3 hours.



12: As the papers are printed, they are sent to the loading dock where trucks wait to take them to carriers, who deliver them to your doorstep, or to route vendors, such as Domingo Cruz, who place them in machines around town.

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

From Ladylike to Liberated

1911

1921

1931

1942

1951

1961

1971

1981

LIFESTYLE: San Antonio Light sections trace metamorphosis from society to features emphasis over the decades.

Women's news progressed from Society to Viva

1992

By CAROLYN N. WARMBOLD
Light features editor

The Light and the concept of society pages were born in the same era, and the coincidence shaped San Antonio coverage of women's lives for decades to come.

In the 1880s, publisher Joseph Pulitzer produced the first women's news items in the New York World. He was not responding to suffrage demands but to department-store advertisers who saw that middle-class women were good customers. Pulitzer's pages featured fashion, etiquette, recipes, beauty tips and interior decorating edged with ads for chiffoniers, cookstoves, cosmetics and corsets.

And Pulitzer's pages celebrated society with a capital S. The debutantes, brides and mavens featured were the wives and daughters of advertisers. The society page formula, exclusionary and exclusive, was in place for decades.

But strict rules governed the newspaper appearance of even society women. Until World War II, it was deemed that a lady's name should appear in print only when she was "hatched, matched, debuted and dispatched." Until lifestyle sections were born in the 1970s, much of a woman's life was ignored.

The progression of The Light's society, women's, lifestyle and features sections followed national trends. Women's news during the paper's 112-year existence might be divided into five eras: How to Be a Lady (1881-1906); Society with a Capital S (1906-1941); The World of Womanliness (1941-1977); How People Live (1977-1986); and Newspaperwide Emphasis (1986 to present).

And during those 11 decades, most women came to value being ladylike less than being liberated.

HOW TO BE A LADY

In its first decades, The Light did not have labeled society pages. Instead, tidbits of women's news ran throughout the paper.

Gossip about local residents was given front-page placement in the "City Items" column in the first Light on Jan. 20, 1881. "Mr. Slim Hart," it was noted, "is having a gay time since he left passing himself off as a newly married man." Over time, that column – later called "Rays of Light" – sprinkled moral pronouncements among the gossip.

And The Light told women how to be ladies. In 1881, "What Girls Should Learn" noted that a young lady "should be given a fair stock of clothes and an account book, in which she should be taught to enter everything she spends or receives" in preparation for running a household.

The ideal woman, it emerged, should tend to her figure *and* her figures, before and after marriage. Once wedded, however, she entered a twilight zone of invisibility.

For example, the third issue of The Light ran an item about "a select and recherche" hop at Turner Hall. There were two long guest lists: married men ("Mr. Sam Maverick wore a pleasant smile, and was as lively as a cricket") and single young ladies ("Miss Bettie Holcomb wore a long train, light blue silk, trimmed with Spanish lace"). The married women attending were simply referred to as the men's "better halves."

That was gender etiquette in 1881 newspapers. Men were shown in action, single women as mannequins, and matrons hardly at all. Married women often were depicted as harpies. In 1881, The Light printed a poem from The New Orleans Times: "Before marriage, With wonderous care, She seeks the mirror, And bangs her hair. After marriage, With angry glare, She grabs her slipper, And bangs her heir."

No, all was not happy in the American family at the turn of the century, but you had to look to advertising to discover it. Husbands with sexual problems had no Dr. Ruth to write for advice but could order Ozmanlis Oriental Sexual Pills, which provided "Sure, Prompt, Positive Cure for Impotence, Loss of Manhood, Seminal Emissions, Spermatorrhea, Nervousness, Self Distrust. . . ."

And if ads are any gauge, women suffered mightily from "female ailments." By 1901, San Antonians who experienced "The Nerves of Women" could order Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for "the monthly sickness and to overcome all those uterine derangements that excite the nerves."

In the late 19th century, The Light, like most dailies, ran fictional serials that espoused virtuous etiquette for women. In "A Maid Forlorn," the heroine (and presumably the reader) learned the value of chastity and true love. Other fictional heroines were slandered and betrayed by men, only to overcome the villains in the end.

In real life, women often did not. A 15-line news story in an 1886 Light told of "A Domestic Tragedy." When a Fort Worth wife left an abusive husband to return to her father, the husband killed her, her father and himself. "The parties are all well-to-do," the story noted, as if it were a curious fact. In 1992, 106 years later, Light writers Mary Lance and Melissa Fletcher Stoeltje would spotlight widespread domestic violence in our own community, noting that it cuts across all economic strata.

SOCIETY WITH A CAPITAL S

By 1906, society pages were clearly labeled in The Light and more space was given over to women's interest news. There were two audiences for those pages – San Antonio's *crème de la crème* whose every social move

Please turn to next page

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

VIVA: Women's news evolved from ladylike to liberated

Continued from previous page

was chronicled; and the rising middle-class woman, who was concerned with home management while aspiring upward.

For the housewife, there were homemaking hints, weekly menus, patterns and a syndicated Erma Bombeck-like column by Helen Rowland called "Meditations of a Married Woman." Rowland joked, "Some wives are so bored that they look forward almost with excitement to the day of their own funeral when they will receive a few flowers and compliments and be the center of attention."

But society coverage with a capital S, rather than home management, remained at the fore. Photographs replaced illustrations, and the pages were crowded with pictures of marriageable women. By 1916, photos of San Antonio brides, debutantes and women visitors took up entire covers of the Sunday Society section and continued to dominate the pages for more than a decade.

Yet, as early as 1911 – when Miss Betty Matthews was society editor and Miss Catherine Joseph was her assistant – curious dualities leapt off the page. On the one hand, women were labeled "divinities" and told that "of all days in a woman's life, the wedding day is the most sacred."

But columnist Dorothy Dix took that religiosity to task. "Woman's sacred influence," she asserted, "is a lovely subject for song and story, but it is not a decent substitute for the ballot."

Still, the quest for love was of unending interest to readers of the women's page. In 1916, The Light's society editor rejoiced that it was Leap Year when "maidens . . . may invite a man to take them to dinner or to the theater or to ride. They may even propose." But there were limits as to how far a lady could go, as Beatrice Fairfax noted in her column on the "Foolishness of Petting."

Even female etiquette took on an emancipated tone. Columnist Ada Patterson agreed that "the woman who knows when to use a padlock of silence is the mistress of practically any matrimonial situation," but curtly reminded husbands that it wasn't unmanly to push around the perambulator.

By 1921, Mary Roberts Rinehart was asking Light readers, "What Does the Woman of Today Want? A Home or a Career? Love or Fame? Children or Independence?"

Discussion developed on the "domination of women." By 1926, The Light editorial page labeled "Poor, Dwindling Man" as "The Vanishing Sex." An accompanying cartoon by Charles Dana Gibson showed two large women, one holding a miniature male in the palm of her hand. The article noted that while "everything in our civilization tends to make women bigger and more powerful – golf, dancing, short hair and short skirts," men had ceased playing rough games and "now sit WATCHING SOMEBODY ELSE PLAY football."

It gradually became important that women, including socialites, be pictured as *doing* something, as well as being pretty. The section changed its name from "In Society" to "Society-Music-Clubs-Clubwomen."

No one in the '30s covered social doings with more zest than Light Society Editor Clara Caffery Pancoast, who held that position until the late '30s. The story goes that when Pancoast was looking for a new writer for The Light's society section, she visited the Louise Dimaline Business School. Miriam McGary, a 1933 Rice graduate who was taking business courses, answered the door. When Pancoast hired McGary, she probably did not realize she was ushering in a new era.

THE WORLD OF WOMANLINESS

McGary, who was at The Light from 1936 until she retired in 1977, was society editor for most of those 41 years. During that time the section changed names with abandon: Society, Woman Today, The Smart Set, Women's Activities, Southwest Living and Woman's World.

According to McGary, who today at 80 takes music courses at San Antonio College and cooks up a storm, the section titles were the male editors' ideas. "They changed the names," she said recently, "but we paid no attention. We had the same stuff we always did.

"We covered every club in this town and handled them with kid gloves. There were lots of weddings and a lot of people going on vacation. We were a chatterbox about what people were doing."

Society Editor Martha Shook Calhoun (later Houston), who both preceded and replaced Pancoast as society editor, began the long-running, popular column Pilon, a potpourri of family news written in New Yorker magazine style.

When Calhoun left her job in 1939, McGary continued the column for decades. Later, Helen White Harnisch created the local Dear Bessie column about social doings. Signed simply Helen, it ran every Sunday for five years. In the 1950s, that column was taken over by Ann Edens Degener, who said in a recent interview that she felt lucky to finally earn a byline in an era when most women's page writers went nameless.

Despite McGary's contention that her staff wrote "the same stuff" during her tenure, the section shifted its focus from society coverage to women's activities, urged on by World War II.

A 1942 article headlined "Mrs. America Learns to Do Her Own Work" by Lita Price told the story of a prototypical housewife who was angry about losing her servant, then mused that Mr. America was about to depart for officer's training school and that their income would be slashed considerably. In the course of the article, Mrs. America decided that the children could learn to dust the bric-a-brac, signed herself up for a business course and organized her life by making lists. She left her house "with the feeling that somehow or other, she would manage."

Manage women did, though the essential "womanliness" of their world remained ever present, even in the comics. In a 1942 strip, Dagwood found a "swell war map" in the newspaper. As he prepared to hang it on the wall, Blondie cut out the piccalilli recipe on the back. Grumbled Dagwood, "The whole world at each other's throats and she's thinking of piccalilli."

By the end of the war, Mrs. America was remarkably independent. At newspapers, women had moved out of society departments to replace male editors and reporters who became soldiers. In 1946, those women were promptly rehoused in society departments, amid some grumbling. Their female readers faced the same recontainment of interests.

In the Woman Editor, a King Features publication for the nation's society writers, one editor noted "there's a tough job ahead for women's page editors in making home life attractive for their readers. With all the stories you heard about how hard it was to keep a war job and a home running, many women are finding it much harder to become adjusted to a housewife's career again."

Indeed, women's pages were never the same again as women's interests broadened and even bifurcated. A 1947 edition of The Light featured both a young mother in an ad cooing over her new baby carriage "made in a real exciting blue!" and a woman steeplejack.

Nor did the return of the troops mean the reinstallation of society to the section front page. Instead, "Women's Activities" Sunday covers, like one in early 1951, featured San Antonio women pilots.

Society, however, was covered by the venerable Ann Luke Diver, who recently celebrated her 103rd birthday in a San Antonio nursing home. Diver gleefully wrote about social events for 44 years – at the Express from 1928-37 and The Light from 1937-72.

Another trend affected women's editors in the 1950s – their departments, once part of the newsrooms, were moved to separate, tastefully decorated quarters on different floors. The notion was that women readers, coming to place their club and wedding news in the paper, should not have to walk past the messy, bawdy male realms of news and sports. The social order was no different at The Light where the women's section was housed on the third floor next to the publisher's office, while the men toiled away on the fourth floor.

The Nerves of Women
Emily Post
Snacks for Casual Visitors?
If Neighbors Came to See Your New Home, You Are Not Expected to Provide Them With Refreshments—Except Perhaps at Tea-Time.

BLONDIE—Bottleneck!
(Don't forget Blondie in Sunday's Light.)
—By Chic Young
GEE, HERE'S A SWELL WAR MAP—IT SHOWS ALL THE IMPORTANT BATTLE GROUNDS—I'LL CUT IT OUT
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A MAP LIKE THIS FOR A LONG TIME
JUST A MINUTE DEAR, LET ME READ THE RECIPE PRINTED ON THE BACK OF IT
HEY! I WANT TO TACK THAT ON THE WALL WITH MY OTHER WAR MAPS
I'M SORRY DEAR BUT I NEED A PICCALILLI RECIPE FOR MY COOK BOOK
THE WHOLE WORLD AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS AND SHE'S THINKING OF PICCALILLI!

In the late 1950s and '60s, McGary's staff – "they were bright and good writers," she says – began to produce significant feature stories about local home decorating, interesting women, the popular "What's Cookin' " and fashion accompanied by color photography.

By 1961, the section was named "Southwest Living," eventually changed to the more global "Women's World." The second wave of feminism of the 1970s had hit San Antonio, and articles began to wonder if masculinity was dead in the face of women's lib. By 1977, the time came for McGary to retire. "Fifteen minutes later," she quips, "they started using computers."

HOW PEOPLE LIVE

McGary's replacement was Sharon Watkins, who, though she never thought of herself as a feminist, certainly was liberated. Watkins had been a political reporter who had just covered the mayoral election of Lila Cockrell.

San Antonio politicos were amazed by her decision, but, as Watkins says, "I was 30, had two young kids and I didn't want to be a reporter anymore. I really wanted to make the switch."

As a working wife and mother of two young children, she wondered why The Light didn't have more stories about what real women were doing, particularly when other newspapers were emphasizing lifestyle. And she wondered about working women like herself – why weren't they represented? In 1977, she asked the questions of managing editor Kenneth R. Byrd, who suggested she design a new section. Watkins immediately said yes.

Watkins did not scrap the traditional interests but decided to profile women in the business world and to write "how-to" features. The new emphasis was apparent in the very first Living Today section on May 29, 1977, which featured sexual harassment in the office.

During Watkins' tenure, The Light responded to the women's rights movement, perhaps best illustrated by the usage of names. In the 1970s, women readers demanded that their identities be recognized with their own first names, with Ms., or with a hyphenated version of maiden-married names. Light editors awarded women the use of their own first names and referred to them by their last name on second reference.

There were other significant moves toward equality. Under McGary, bridal and engagement photos were all made the same size, a practice that did away with awarding larger pictures to socialites. Eventually, men were allowed to be included in engagement and finally in wedding pictures.

Watkins remained true to her vow to highlight women who were active in the community. In 1979, she introduced the long-standing weekly profile, Today's Woman (later Sunday Woman). Watkins is proudest of this legacy, which, she says, "has recognized a lot of deserving, doing women who never would have been singled out otherwise."

Over 11 years, more than 500 local women were featured, and each became eligible to be Woman of the Year. The list of honorees illustrates not only the growing emphasis on women as movers and shakers, but on The Light's evolving consciousness of community ethnicity.

Society coverage was redefined with R.S.V.P., a photo column that showed San Antonians of all economic backgrounds, races and ethnicities socializing in the city.

Those attempts at egalitarianism continued after Watkins left the section in 1981 to become city editor and later assistant managing editor/acting business editor. She and Lynnell Burkett, editorial page editor, are among the high-ranking women in the newsroom. Nearly every editorial department has had a female head. And that circumstance, too, has profoundly influenced women's coverage at The Light.

NEWSPAPERWIDE EMPHASIS

The movement toward women's inclusion throughout the newspaper began with the hiring of Mary Ann Horne, who immediately updated Living Today by adding gossip, celebrity news and controversial sex columnist Dr. Ruth to the regular format.

Horne and Jeff Cohen, then assistant managing editor, next went to work to develop a new philosophy of features and a new section. The Light sponsored focus groups and discovered that readers liked a tabloid size. Cohen, now managing editor, explains that "we set out to create a lively looking section that people would fight over in the morning at breakfast."

The editors adopted the existing name of a popular Light-produced Sunday magazine, and on Feb. 23, 1987, the daily Viva tabloid was born. The content included trend and entertainment stories, advice, syndicated and local columnists, People items, society news, R.S.V.P. photos and comics. And the look, overseen by then design director Jeff Heinke, was graphically crisp.

"We wanted to make it an appealing package that would not exclude any reader," says Horne, who has since become executive news editor.

What Viva emphatically was not was a woman's or society section, though vestiges of both remained. The move away from tradition was deliberate, according to Cohen. "During the early '80s," he says, "we made an effort to get women off the traditional women's pages and onto the fronts of the other sections – business, sports, metro. That left us with the ability to have a features section that was of general interest and not one that was gender-based."

The misses Betty Matthews and Catherine Joseph, those 1911 society editors, would be shocked by Viva.

And they would have been surprised at how large the features domain has become. By 1992, the staff consisted of more than 20 editors and reporters and several regular critics who produced daily and Sunday Viva sections, a weekly Ticket guide to entertainment, a weekly TVweek magazine and Travel section, regular bridal and fashion sections, the glitzy Insider, and the popular food section, Flavor.

Those sections also were formed in the electric heat of an intense newspaper war. "It profoundly drove us and affected the shape," says Horne, who remembers sleepless nights and bloodshot eyes as they created Viva.

Cohen agrees that the newspaper war affected features coverage just as features coverage affected local newspapering. "We (the Express-News and The Light) reacted to each other in San Antonio regularly. Good ideas tended to be copied back and forth. Television and entertainment listings, the food sections – those were major battlegrounds. Historically, when we go back to circulation shifts in San Antonio, comics and syndicated columns played major roles."

Because of the importance of features in the war, Cohen says, "publishers gave tremendous amounts of space to them and constantly searched for innovations that pushed each other to be better."

Finally, San Antonio pushed The Light to do better, too. Horne, who moved here in 1985, points out that San Antonio has changed tremendously in the interim. "When I came here, they had just run the first '60 Minutes' special on Henry Cisneros. San Antonio was just beginning to creep into the national spotlight.

"There hadn't been anything like the drug summits. There was nothing like the museum's Rockefeller collection then. All the time the city was growing and Henry was pushing it and the Hispanic culture came to the fore. All that happened and the city developed a personality.

"We San Antonians became proud of who we were, and we at The Light tried to put out a newspaper that reflected that. We all grew up together."

Goodbye from Heloise

Writing Hints from Heloise has been such a wonderful experience, especially with the San Antonio Light as my anchor paper.

When my mother, the original Heloise, and my father, Mike Cruse, moved here in 1966, I started learning about the newspaper business.

Going to visit the paper was a big, exciting event because my mother worked in her home/office then, as I do now.

The San Antonio Light has provided me and my family with many memories and special people I wish I had space to thank.

I feel a great loss, like losing a beloved aunt or favorite uncle. The San Antonio Light has been a part of my family for so long. The warm feeling of comfort, history and experience sadly is going to be gone!

What can I leave you with in this final edition of the paper that "grew me up"?

A newspaper offers so much to us with news, features, columns, comics, sports and community service. I hope Hints from Heloise has contributed to San Antonio, too. I'm proud to have been a part of the newspaper.

A song phrase comes to mind – "Turn out the lights, the party's over." The San Antonio Light has given us a daily party. I will miss it.

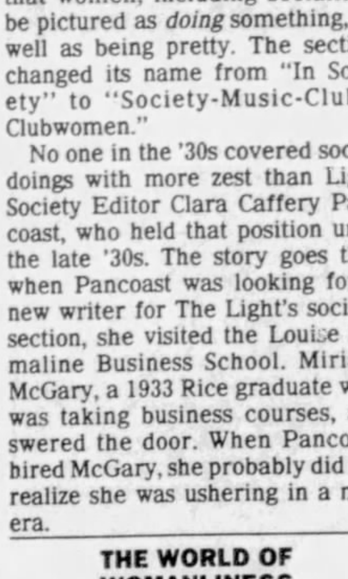
Here's my final hint in this great paper...

Will the last one leaving the newsroom turn out the light? But remember where the switch is – just in case!

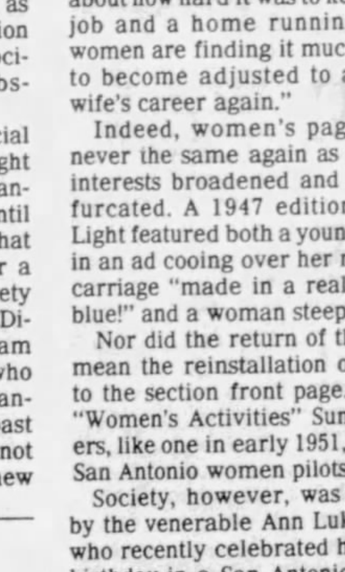
Hugs, Heloise

-30-

LIFESTYLE EDITORS THROUGH THE YEARS

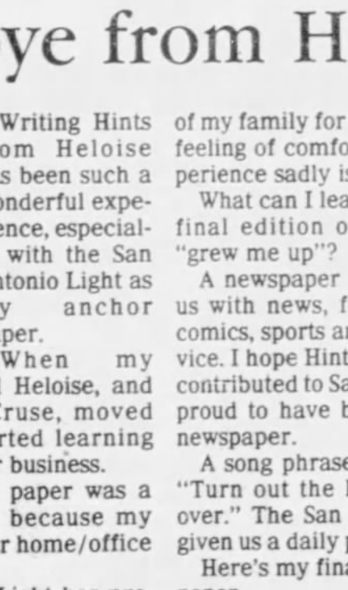


MIRIAM McGARY
Editor/writer, 1936-77

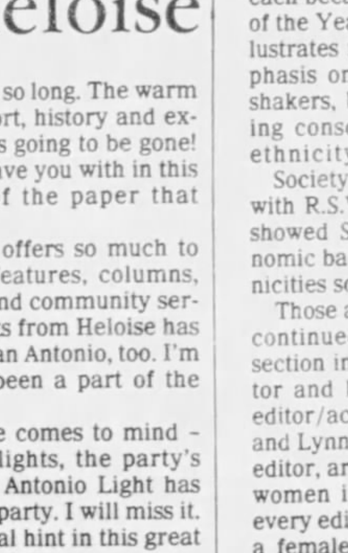


ANN LUKE DIVER
Society writer, 1937-72

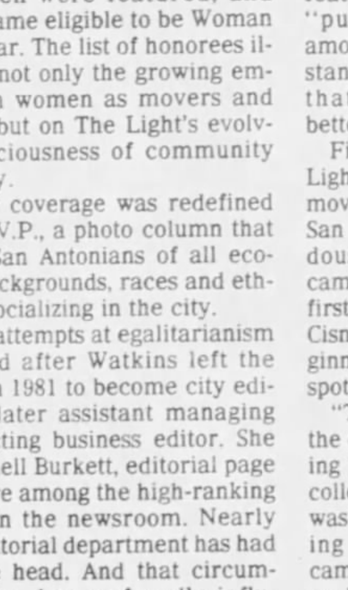
SHARON WATKINS
Living Today, 1977-81



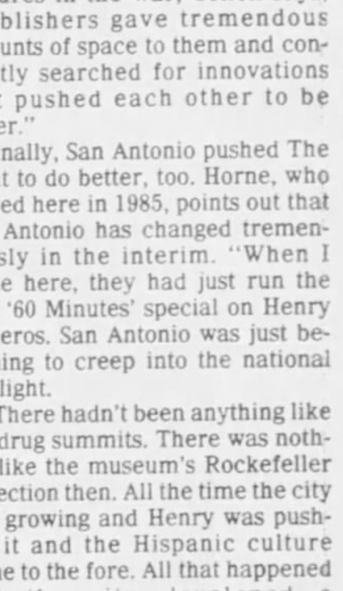
KATHLEEN RICKETTS
Living Today, 1981-85



MARY ANN HORNE
Features editor, 1985-89



JOEL SOLIS
Features editor, 1990-91



CAROLYN WARMBOLD
Features editor, 1992-93

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

RICK CASEY

The Light succumbs to cold economy

Continued from page 1

more likely to take on people in power.

The more sophisticated politicians, however, will miss the opportunity to play one newspaper against the other.

Maury Maverick Jr. tells a story about his father, the late San Antonio congressman and mayor of a half-century ago.

"The Light had jumped on him for the extravagance of installing a shower and restroom next to the mayor's office," he says. "My daddy called in an Express photographer."

Maverick, not one whose main concern was a dignified image, posed fully clothed on the toilet – holding, as though to wipe himself, a copy of The Light.

Politicians are a bit more subtle nowadays. They play off the rivalry between the two papers to get one to undermine a story that the other initiated. Or they get prominent play for a story they want by giving one paper an exclusive.

No more.

The Light is succumbing to the cold economic winds that have toppled paper after paper. One veteran Light reporter (who asked that his name not be used for fear it would hurt his prospects) is playing pall bearer to his fifth Texas daily.

This reporter was feeling sorry for himself, until he went to a nursing home for a story the other day. There he saw people "staring off into space, waiting without hope."

> *As for me, I'm staying. San Antonio is where I belong.*

After more than three months in limbo, most the news staff was ready for the plug to be pulled. Happily, the reputation of The Light has grown nationally in the past decade, to the point that reporters and editors are getting good receptions at newspapers across the country. Many already have jobs lined up. Others have nibbles.

All may be inspired by the legend of Frank "Punch" Laro, who was fired by The Light in 1941, apparently over some combination of his drinking and his union sympathies.

Laro responded by heading first to a series of bars, then to the Southern Pacific Depot. He asked first for a ticket to Los Angeles.

"I'm going to work for the L.A. Times," he said.

When the clerk informed him the next train to L.A. wasn't until the next day, but a train was heading out soon to New Orleans, he said, "Okay, I'll go to work for the Picayune."

And he did.

As for me, I'm staying. I have moved back to San Antonio twice without a job. It's where I belong.

There's no better town for a news person. Where else, in a period of 15 years, can you get the Fiesta sniper, Theresa Brown, Bernardo Eureste, Genene Jones, Stephen Smith, COPS, Henry Cisneros, fluoride, Applewhite, C.A. Stubbs, the police and fire contract, a weeping Virgin, the Finck Cigar Building, the Main Plaza Building, Henry B. (for boxer?) Gonzalez, Brian Glazer, Oliver Heard, the Reyes Feos, the catfish farmer – just to mention a few?

And in addition to the personalities, there is, at least metaphorically speaking, no shortage of outhouses to uncover.

Besides, Hearst officials say they want to take two good newspapers and produce one great one. I want to see if they mean it.

WILL THE REAL BEN SIEGAL . . . : Nearly every morning, former City Editor Ben Siegal would meet informally with then-Managing Editor Ed Rademaekers. As Halloween neared one year, more than a dozen staffers donned masks copied from a life-size picture of Siegal's face, sneaking up to a window in Rademaeker's office. Rademaekers enjoyed the prank so much he ordered a photograph, which was published the next day.

Blame the deadlines

Newsroom has reputation for playing jokes

By VAUGHN HAGERTY
Assistant city editor

Maybe it's the deadline pressure. Or maybe it's just the natural result of gathering so many showoffs in one office.

Something in the news profession occasionally makes us drop televisions out of second-story windows and smash raw eggs on the heads of co-workers. It makes us spend inordinate amounts of time plotting, then carrying out elaborate tricks on one another.

Take Assistant Managing Editor Jeff Heinke – please.

Heinke was the master of the scam. Years ago, he played an extended joke on editorial cartoonist John Darkow. For weeks, Heinke would call Darkow, pretending to be "Joe Robinson," an elderly street person teetering on the precipice of emotional disaster. Sympathetic, Darkow would counsel "Joe," patiently listening as he poured out his complaints.

Soon everyone in the newsroom was in on the joke, except for Darkow. After more than a month, Heinke finally tipped his hand: He did his "Joe Robinson" voice in front of Darkow.

Darkow took his revenge during that year's Fiesta. Carrying a cascarone, he stalked up to Heinke, who threw open his arms and welcomed the chance to take an easy punishment. The yolk (sorry, couldn't resist) was on Heinke. It wasn't a cascarone, it was a raw egg.

Even inanimate objects weren't safe. On the city desk – the nerve center of local news coverage – sits a television. Although print journalists hate to admit it, television news is a handy tool, sort of a safety net to ensure we keep up with the competition.

We've had a nice color set lately, but for years we made do with a vintage black-and-white model that had aged somewhat gracelessly: The components glowed when you turned it on, if it came on at all. We never could get it replaced. So one day, Cardwell took charge.

"I'm gonna drop that thing out the window," he said, and others soon took up the call. Like a lynch mob, we unplugged it and hauled it into Cardwell's second-floor office, which overlooks McCullough.

Reporter Michael Pearson was sent down to keep the sidewalk clear of pedestrians, and a photographer was stationed to record the historic event. (Photographers say the negatives have since disappeared.) On Pearson's signal, Cardwell dropped the doomed set to the sidewalk. The newsroom cheered.

There was a bit of trouble, however. Joe Vied, the company comptroller, called a few minutes later to ask why a TV set had just plummeted past his window.

If he'd worked on the second floor, the answer would have been plain. It was just the folks in the newsroom, acting crazy to keep themselves sane.

LILLIE RODULFO

Everyday people are the real heroes

When I was offered this column in 1986, I knew I wanted to cover the news like they used to in the good ol' days, when newspapers were for and about "everyman."

I knew times had changed. That now, "everyman" is more often than not a woman, a person of color, or both.

In San Antonio, as in the rest of the nation, "everyman" is Mom and Dad trying to make ends meet on two incomes, or a single head of household working two or three jobs.

More and more, "everyman" is one of the working poor.

Neither rich nor famous, the people quoted or written about in this space have not been powerless or unimportant. I call them grass-roots leaders – the real movers and shakers of this town.

Wanda Ahrlett is one such San Antonian. I interviewed her about the first Polish Heritage Day fund-raiser at the Polish-American Center on Mission Road. I asked why, and got the first item for my column.

"Local Polish-Americans are joining together to help Polish refugees resettle in San Antonio," I wrote in my column of Oct. 24, 1986.

Ahrlett, as she had done in the '50s, was taking the lead in helping refugees fleeing religious and political persecution in Poland. She helped bring their wives and children here as their government tried to crush the Solidarity movement.

One man said the column led him to Ahrlett in his quest to bring his family safely out of Eastern Europe.

Ahrlett, 60, now says: "My part is done; the families have been reunited. They have gotten good jobs, bought homes and become self-sufficient."

Later, when I covered a demonstration against the war in Central America, I was asked why, when this is a military town?

"That's precisely why they're having it, and it's news," I answered.

"People are going to think you're a leftist," some said.

When I wrote about the first AIDS awareness forum in the heart of the Mexican-American community, again I was asked, "Why write about *AIDS?*"

"Because people are dying from it," I responded.

When I quoted an expert who said Mexico had the first medical school in North America 30 years before "the first log cabin settlements by the English at Jamestown," I was told "Mexico isn't in North America."

My readers have been desperate for news of college funds and affordable health care. The topics that continued to generate interest months after publication were those about scholarships for Hispanics and Mexican folk medicine.

While less fortunate columnists received chocolates, champagne and flowers, I received prayers. I also received coupons for Dunkin' Donuts and McDonald's.

You have communicated back to me in interesting ways.

Thank you for the fine-art postcards and a miniature of my favorite Matisse painting, complete with what I think were plastic spiders, complementing the art.

And which one of you played those lovely arias by Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo leaving no other message on my answering machine?

THE BEST OF THE POLICE BLOTTER

By BRIDGETT CARY
Staff reporter

A FEW TOO MANY

5800 Callaghan: An officer spotted an inebriate snoozing in a car and, after repeated efforts, roused him from his alcohol-induced haze. Confused, the guy awoke and tried to start his car — apparently unaware of who had awakened him. The cop apprised the sleepy fellow of his impending arrest, then found a joint on the dashboard. Sept. 15, 1991.

500 N. San Manuel: An officer noticed a man knocking on a door in the wee hours of the morning and asked what he was doing. The man — who smelled like a distillery, had bloodshot eyes and was wobbling — replied that he lived there and told the officer what he apparently thought was the address. The cop arrested him for public intoxication when the address given was nowhere close to the home in question. March 22, 1992.

BAR SCENES

200 S. Alamo: A barmaid was attacked by a woman while serving drinks to the assailant and her boyfriend. The suspect told police she had launched the attack after the victim asked her honey if he was ordering a drink for his grandmother, referring to her. April 30, 1989.

12300 Wetmore: A bar patron claimed to be a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission agent and demanded to see a club's liquor and tax licenses but failed to produce any ID of his own. When the manager asked him to show a badge, he bellowed that he would shut the place down if anyone messed with him. A buddy apologized for him, explained the guy was only in training as a peace officer and hauled the overwrought wannabe outside. June 16, 1991.

BEST BUDDIES

1900 Austin Hwy.: Young anglers attacked one another when one of the fishermen broke a bottle near a cohort, who grew crabby and gave him a right hook, knocking the victim to the ground. Both sportsmen perched themselves for a final assault, but the battle abated when the slugger pulled out a knife and carped that he would have to scale the bottle-breaker. Feb. 1, 1987.

1800 N. New Braunfels: An afternoon of drinking and discussing hairstyle alternatives was cut short when one fashion-conscious buddy told the other that her hairstyle was unpleasant. The female with the unhip flip yanked out a knife and stabbed her critical friend. Sept. 16, 1990.

BIGGEST BULLIES

4600 S. Flores: Two clerks at a fast-food eatery ran for their lives when an irate customer pulled a sawed-off shotgun and pointed it at them for forgetting to give him napkins with his order. July 31, 1988.

1200 N.W. 24th: Four thugs sauntered into a taco joint, placed an order and wolfed down the grub, then peered around the place looking for prey to foot their bill. When a patron pulled out money to pay for his meal, the four intimidators seized the opportunity to snatch $4 from him at gunpoint. The victim and his three pals duked it out with the grabby quartet, but to no avail — the cagey foursome flew the coop. July 28, 1991.

CRIMES THAT DID NOT PAY

10300 S. Presa: A burglar found himself hogtied with his pants down in his intended victim's driveway after the resident caught him trying to break into his home. The would-be victim said the pest repeatedly had tried to sneak inside after he told him to beat it, so he lassoed him, tied him up and had a relative notify police, who arrested the wretch. Aug. 11, 1991.

1600 Palo Alto: A couple thwarted two maladroit muggers after the villains tried to take the lady's purse at a park bench. While the woman clung to her bag, her spouse lambasted the other thug by grabbing his ponytail, flipping him through the air and slugging him. The hood's buddy saw him losing ground, so he unhanded the lady and the loot to shove her hubby. The desperados departed empty-handed. Sept. 8, 1991.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

6000 Yacht Harbor: A man sparked a family feud when he accidentally stepped on his mother-in-law's toe. Although the son-in-law apologized, his drunken father-in-law belabored the issue and stepped on his own daughter's foot in retaliation for the blunder. When the son-in-law tried to intervene on his wife's behalf, the father pounced on him and dealt a pummeling. Dec. 1, 1991.

400 N. Star Mall: An intoxicated man who was in charge of collecting stolen items that his wife and children brought to him during a family shoplifting spree was apprehended when a security guard stopped him as he left a store. His wife and offspring bolted in the opposite direction to avoid capture. May 20, 1990.

READER FAVORITES

POLICE BLOTTER: The blotter — a compendium of the strange situations police encounter on a daily basis — was started in 1986, and quickly became popular with readers. Some favorite excerpts from the past are featured on this page.

AROUND THE PLAZA: This was a catch-all column of various tidbits, from recipes to people in the news. Many different people wrote the column, but perhaps the most famous was Renwicke Cary who wrote the column in the 50s and the 60s. Another popular writer of the column was Ed Castillo. In later years, it was written by Frank Trejo, one of the first Hispanic journalists in the state on a daily newspaper, who reported on West Side activities.

BEXAR FACTS: This daily entertainment column chronicled the city's night life. It was written by various people through the years and included news on local clubs and club owners. One familiar writer was Morris Willson.

DON POLITICO: This was one of the best-known political pages in Texas (a bar in Austin was named after it). It included political chitchat, inside information and hard news, sprinkled with a little gossip. It appeared Sunday, and local politicians were known to gather at Light vending machines in anticipation of its arrival. Because the stories were run under the pseudonym "Don Politico," staffers were able to contribute items without fear of backlash from the people the page took to task. Two staffers known to compile the page were Kemper Diehl and, later, Ben Siegal.

THE STROLLER: This was a column that appeared on a sporadic basis. Its main goal was to expose corruption in the city and county. It also used a pseudonym to protect reporters. The name came from early reporters who would stroll pass brothels and other illegal goings-on and report on them.

LAMEST EXCUSES

West Bexar County: A man grabbed a theme park employee during a fish show and began fondling her. As he was being arrested, he defended his actions by saying he did not understand American customs. May 27, 1990.

12000 Northledge, Live Oak: "You want to mess with me? Come get me. I'll take you out." That's what an intoxicated man shouted at an officer while pointing a rifle at him after the officer arrived to check out a disturbance. After he was arrested, the offender changed his tune. "I'm sorry. I didn't know you were a police officer. Do you think I would point a gun at you if I knew?" June 5, 1988.

3700 N. St. Mary's: Police stopped a man accused by a female jogger of grabbing her as she ran near a park. "Man, I did not grab her," he said. "I kinda lost my balance; I almost fell off my bike. I didn't grab her, but I might have touched her, or my arm might have bumped her while trying to catch my balance." After listening to his story, officers arrested him. June 12, 1988.

MAVERICK MOTORISTS

6800 Ingram: After plowing past four high-water barricades, a motorist told the officer who stopped him that he not committed any offense. Just then, two other drivers started through the water from the other side, and the man pointed them out, saying the cop should cite them as well. When the officer said he already was busy and could not stop them, the infuriated driver said he would take matters into his own hands and began driving toward the oncoming vehicles. He was arrested, and the other drivers were cited. March 15, 1992.

5400 Broadway: "You're not going to give me any tickets! Give me my driver's license," an angry 75-year-old woman snapped at a police officer who was issuing her three traffic citations. The motorist kept trying to snatch her license out of the officer's hands but in exasperation finally slapped the officer's face and kicked her. When placed in the officer's patrol car, the woman continued to struggle until she was handcuffed and restrained. June 29, 1989.

POINTS TO PONDER

900 Pat Booker, Universal City: A police officer was approached by a female wearing handcuffs and accompanied by a male at 4 a.m. The male said they had been at a party and could not remove the cuffs. The female was released to her mother. Jan. 27, 1991.

Northwest Side: An apartment dweller's fondness for expressing himself by performing nude body poses and lewd activities in his open window came to the attention of authorities after a neighbor — who did not appreciate his actions — complained that she had counted 30 such incidents. April 22, 1990.

500 N. Leona: A man, while attempting to convince a parking enforcement officer not to give him a ticket, clucked like a chicken and demanded a duel with the officer, then plowed a fist into the officer's face. In addition to receiving a ticket, he was arrested. June 17, 1990.

OVEREXPOSURE

North Side: Police had to make their way through a crowd of onlookers to break apart a couple having sex in the back of an open pickup truck outside a bar. Officers had to tap the man on the shoulder several times to interrupt the passion play, and both performers were angered by the distraction. The man begged police not to arrest his co-star because he did not want her husband to find out. March 11, 1990.

Southwest Side: A woman attempting to pay for soft drinks wondered why she could not get the attention of a convenience store clerk. The mystery was solved when she looked behind the counter and saw that he was engrossed in a phone conversation while nude below the waist and committing a lewd act. July 22, 1990.

SAY WHAT?

9800 Airport: "I'm going to set the pope's shirt on fire!" a man told a witness at an airport taxi stand. The witness informed Secret Service agents, who detained the would-be assailant but later released him and escorted him off airport property. Sept. 20, 1987.

East Bexar County: After swilling three quarts of beer, a man made romantic overtures toward his wife's friend, punched his spouse when she ordered him to stop and proclaimed, "I'm the king of the house. Whatever I want to do, I can do it." His wife phoned the Sheriff's Department after the sot stumbled to the bathroom for a shower, and he was arrested. April 21, 1991.

THANKLESS JOB

6000 West Ave. An officer's attempt to help a man with two flat tires was unappreciated and met with curses and threats from the man. When arrested for disorderly conduct, he retaliated by telling the officer, "I will find you and kill you, and will burn down your house!" Dec. 30, 1990.

200 Herwick, Castle Hills: A woman who noticed the hood ornament on her car had been turned sideways suspected foul play and demanded that an officer fingerprint it. The officer refused, then drew her ire by straightening the ornament. "Who told him he could straighten it?" she demanded of his supervisor. Oct. 14, 1990.

100 Meadown, Converse: An officer answering a call for a dog bite was told by the victim that he was helping his neighbor's dog over the fence when the pet bit his arm. When the officer requested more information, the man refused, saying he had to go to the hospital. He then told the officer to get out of his yard because he was leaving. July 9, 1989.

TROUBLE WITH AUTHORITY

W. Byrd at Pat Booker: A man who flashed an obscene gesture at an officer led police on a high-speed chase after making an illegal U-turn into the path of oncoming cars. When asked to explain his behavior, he replied, "I get mad when things don't go my way, and I dislike anyone with authority." Oct. 28, 1990.

8500 Broadway: A man who was dismissed from his job became angered at his supervisor and relieved himself on his vehicle, then attacked his ex-boss with a chain and belt. Police were told the assailant had been fired for having a bad attitude at work. May 3, 1987.

UNNEIGHBORLY NEIGHBORS

100 Terrell, Alamo Heights: "I'm the man that will show you God," a man told his neighbor as he shoved her against a wall. His remarks came after she accused him of upsetting her 7-year-old son by telling him his mother was evil and that his grandmother "probably slobbers on her plate when eating." June 24, 1990.

500 Willow, Converse: A woman called police to report that a neighbor, who has a 4,000-amp CB transmitter, transmits obscenities and threats over his neighbors' phones and televisions. She said she had heard him on the radio say he was tired of being harassed and that if he broke a few necks, everyone would be hospitalized too far away to hear him. March 19, 1989.

San Antonio Light
A LOOK BACK

Do you remember...

The actors and events that made sports in the city

By JIM LEFKO and DAVID WHITLEY
Staff reporters

It wasn't easy being a San Antonio sports fan about 1900. The afternoon newspaper was often delivered by mule, and there wasn't much to read once it arrived.

"A fight took place in which a man weighing about 168 pounds beat up a man weighing about 208 pounds. The fight was about a woman and the heavy man was knocked into the mud. A policeman parted them with a severe rebuke and thus the matter was ended."

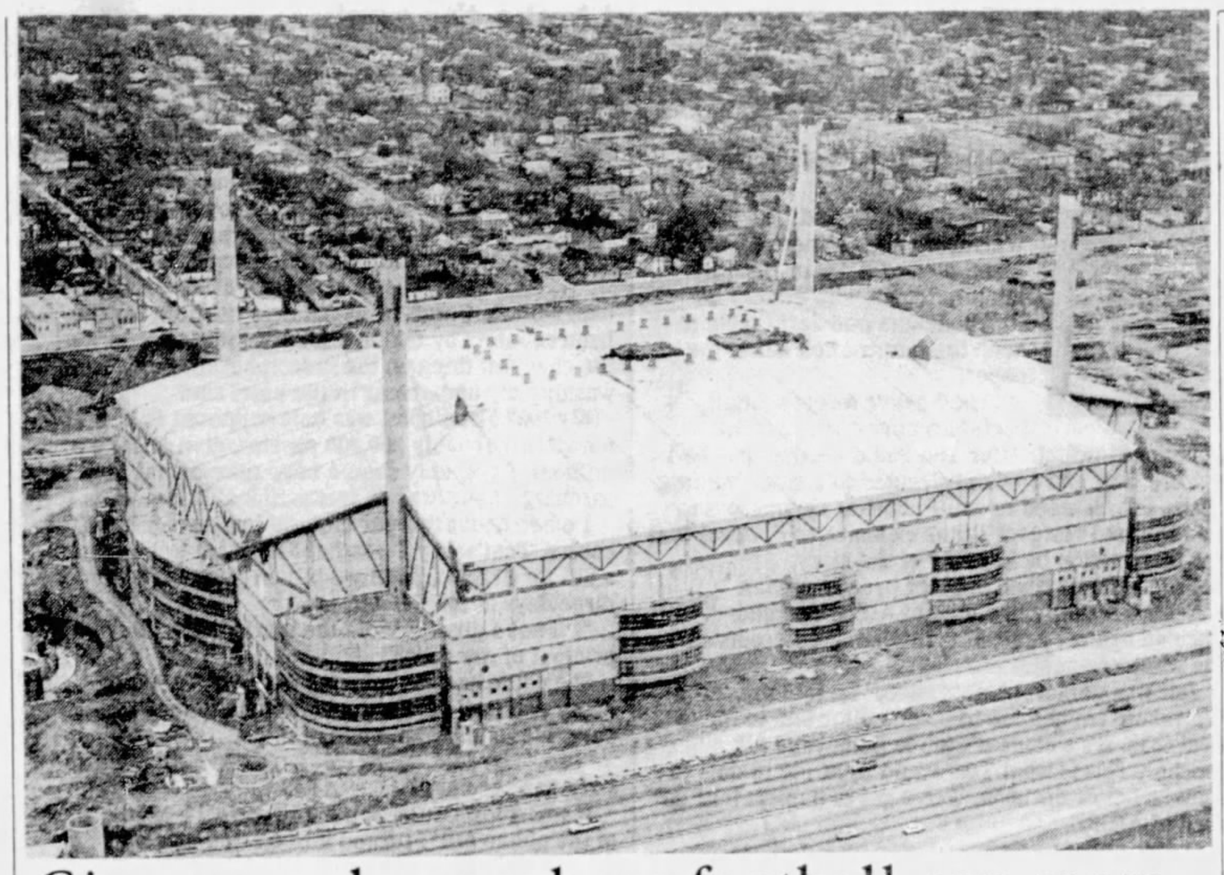
That bout was as close as the Jan. 4, 1901 newspaper got to sports news. It wasn't until 1922 that the city could claim anything approaching a major sports event, and that barely survived thanks to fans emptying their pockets to help pay the winner.

The city's sports history was still in chapter one. Then the pages started flying by.

Kyle Rote was born. The Iceman came. Shaq descended. The Admiral docked. The lights went out at Alamo Stadium. Now the Alamodome is rising, which opens so many sports possibilities that one thing about San Antonio sports is fairly certain:

A mud fight between an unidentified middleweight and an embarrassed heavyweight will never again be that big a deal.

Here's a look at the most memorable chapters in the city's sports history and a preview of the ones still being written.



Give me a dome where football can roam

A group of local sports dreamers went to Colorado Springs in 1987 to make a pitch for the city to host the 1991 U.S. Olympic Festival. Getting turned down might have been the best thing that ever happened to San Antonio sports.

The NCAA Final Four. A CFL team. An NFL team. Even an National Hockey League team. Before the dome, San Antonio could not even dream of landing any of them. Now the dreamers have something tangible to show the world.

"I'm tired of us getting kicked in the teeth because we don't have the facilities," Mayor Henry Cisneros said on the flight home.

Within days, Cisneros had gotten legislation rolling on the Alamodome. San Antonio's $165 million ticket to the bigtime was about to be punched.

"Every major activity we are pursuing is tied in one way or another to the dome," said Bob Coleman, the chairman of the 1993 U.S. Olympic Festival.

This summer's festival will be the first major event in the dome, which will also host the Alamo Bowl, college football games and preseason NFL games before 1993 runs out.

"It's been a fast five years," Coleman said, remembering that fateful 1987 trip. "We've come a helluva long way."

Hey, buddy: Can you spare a dime?

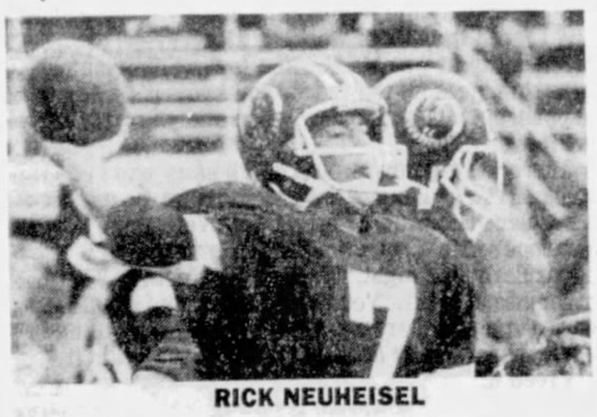
If San Antonio can claim a soft spot in the heart of any sport, it is golf. The city hosts the HEB Texas Open and The Vantage at The Dominion. Oh, what it would have given for a corporate sponsor about 70 years ago.

Bob MacDonald was the first Texas Open winner. He would eventually be joined by Byron Nelson, Arnold Palmer, Sam Snead and Lee Trevino. Presumably, none of them had to wait until sponsors passed a hat among the fans to come up with enough money to pay the winner.

That happened once in the early years. To promote the event, promoters even had the mayor play golf through the downtown streets. Either he was not a big hitter or the downtown was pretty small, because there were no reports of broken windows.

Money was occasionally scarce, but the pros always returned to scorch some of the easiest courses on the tour. Mike Souchak shot a 27-under-par 257 at Brackenridge in 1955, still the lowest four-day total in PGA history.

By then, the downtown was definitely too big to serve as a golf course. No matter. By then, the sport was in San Antonio to stay.



RICK NEUHEISEL

Where were you when the lights went out?

New York had Love Canal. Exxon had the Alaskan coastline. When it comes to being a dumping ground for fly-by-night football ventures, there has never been anyplace like San Antonio.

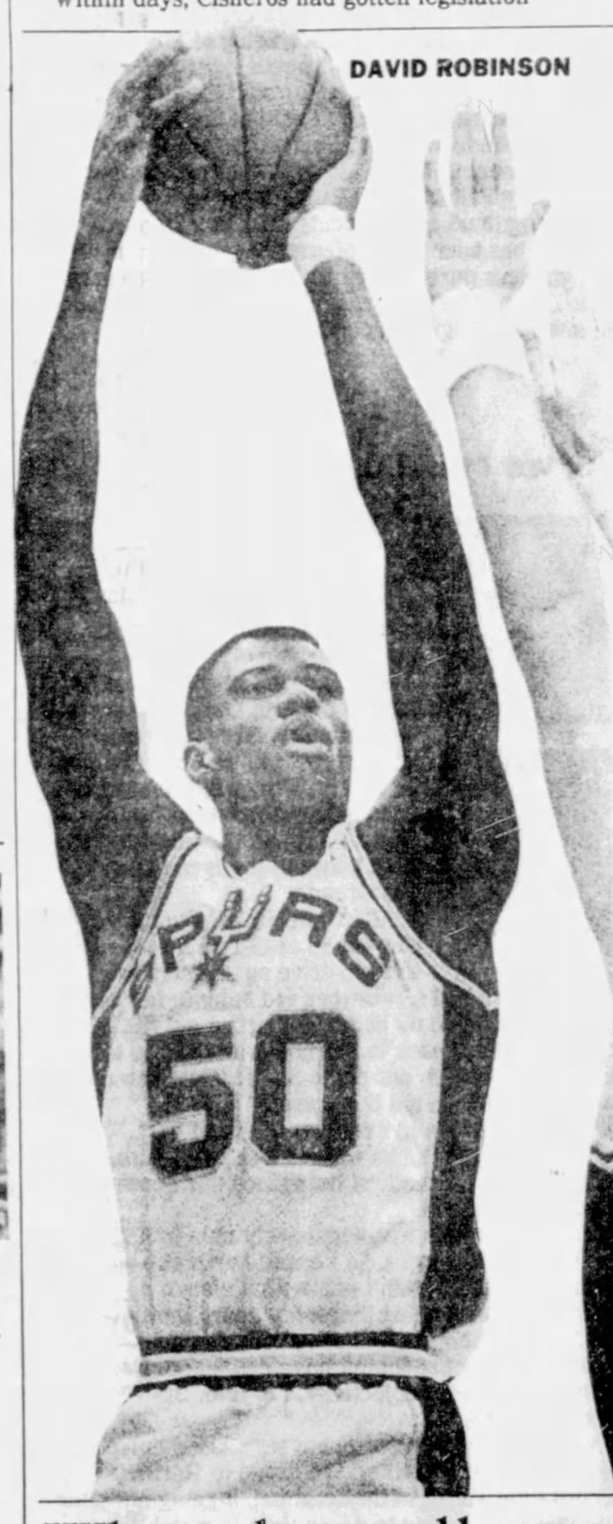
They gave us the tired, the poor, the huddled masses, the Toros, the Wings, the Charros, the Gunslingers, the Riders, the Force. The teams were alternately exciting, endearing, amateurish and completely bogus. None of them went to more extremes than the Gunslingers.

With Rick Neuheisel at quarterback, the team attracted a loyal following to Alamo Stadium from 1984-85. With Clinton Manges at owner, it attracted lawsuits, creditors and a terminal case of the zanies.

On March 5, 1984, with a national TV audience tuned in to watch San Antonio play Jim Kelly's Houston Gamblers, the lights blew out. After a 48-minute delay, a faulty fuse was replaced and the Gamblers finished their 35-7 rout. Sixteen months later, the team, and the league, went dark permanently.

It's a darkness San Antonio is used to. But fear not. The city is a football bus stop. Another league will probably be along in 15 minutes.

DAVID ROBINSON



Land of the giants

One day, they will both belong to the Ages. Or at least the Pro Basketball Hall of Fame. For a few short years, they belonged to San Antonio.

In the Arena was David Robinson, the franchise saver the Spurs won in the 1987 draft lottery. The second pick that year was Armon Gilliam. To paraphrase one of Robinson's early Nike ads, can you say the Orange County Spurs?

While Robinson's arrival revitalized a dying franchise, not many realized that the heir to Wilt Chamberlain's throne had landed a few miles away. Shaquille O'Neal moved to town and walked into the principal's office at Cole High. Build a new trophy case.

The Cougars went 68-1 as O'Neal toyed with players who could fit inside his sneakers. He went on to abuse the college basketball world for three years. Now O'Neal is the darling of the NBA. And he's still not old enough to buy beer.

Remember this date: March 19. O'Neal returns to town to face Robinson. Not just a neigh borhood rumble anymore.

Where have all our heroes gone?

Before Ty Detmer, before Chris Pryor, before Cody Carlson, before Tommy Kramer, before any of the high-school superstars who made bleachers around San Antonio come alive on chilly autumn nights, there was one.

The year was 1946 and Kyle Rote ran wild in Jefferson's single-wing. He went on to be an all-America at SMU and the No. 1 pick in the 1951 NFL draft. He played 10 years for the New York Giants.

A dozen years later, Lee and Brackenridge played perhaps the greatest high-school game in Texas history. Linus Baer scored five touchdowns as the Vols beat the Eagles and Warren McVea 55-48. Baer became a successful banker. McVea would earn a Super Bowl ring with the Raiders before drug problems ruined his life.

The next great quarterback was Tommy Kramer, who led Lee to the 1971 4A title. Touchdown Tommy went to Rice and was selected the quarterback on the All-SWC team of the century, then he played 12 years in the NFL.

That is where a lot of fans figured Judson's Chris Pryor would end up. He was unstoppable in 1983, running for 2,800 yards and 36 touchdowns. Pryor played one year at Texas A&I and left football.

Great expectations were never a problem for Detmer. He was considered too short and too frail by almost everyone except his father, Sonny, who coached him at Southwest, and LaVell Edwards at Brigham Young. Detmer set 59 NCAA records and won a Heisman Trophy for the Cougars.

For high school heroes, the final impression is often the one that lasts. No matter whether they end up a hero like Rote, a trivia question like Pryor or a tragedy like McVea, one thing remains. No one can ever take away those Friday nights.

BUCK HARVEY

Turn out the lights: It sure was a party

My work day began every morning with the same walk and the same anticipation. There, on my driveway, sat two newspapers and one professional high. Did we get them, or did they get us?

My day usually wouldn't end until about 11 p.m. that night, until I had re-read my column and asked a patient desk staff to make *just one more change*. So after a decade of this, everything changes today. Now I can only wonder: Will I ever have more fun again?

The Light has published for more than 100 years, but no time was more ambitious and urgent than the past 10. When I arrived in October of 1982, the sports department summed up a newspaper in need of delousing. We ran advertisements on the front page of a cluttered, three- or four-page sports section. At the time our desk staff was of two people. An early cutline under a George Gervin picture said: "Iceman looks stoned as he drives to the basket."

Stoned? Gawd. I kept a copy of the newspaper when my first column appeared, and I always reviewed that paper the same way: *What was I thinking? Why did I leave the Dallas newspaper market for this?*

I knew why, of course. The Light offered a chance to build something, and everyone who came here then thought that way. Dan Cunningham, young and driven, arrived from the Miami Herald to be our sports editor. And as we stayed up nights, talking about what we wanted The Light to become, we would catch ourselves saying the same thing. This wasn't a job the way we had known them. This was inspiring and scary and personal and fun.

> *What will we do now? Today, I can see the past better. For 10 years I crept out on limbs and loved it.*

The Hearst corporation responded. The entire Light would improve dramatically, adding state-of-the-art graphics, a metro front, a business section and award-winning projects. But sports was the battleground in our world. As the Express-News answered with its own resources, readers got a bargain for a quarter. Had any two newspapers of these circulation sizes ever committed such space to sports? Ask those who read the small sections in St. Louis or Chicago.

We invented and experimented and hoped. We added one-man sports bureaus in Dallas and Houston. We created a separate section for Friday night high school football. We came up with wraparound displays for Spurs playoff games. We went to the Masters, the World Series and the NBA Finals, when no one else in the city did. And using mirrors, we covered it all with a writing staff that could fit in a station wagon.

No matter. We gambled on sharp people out of college who wanted to do better. So what if they used us to get another job? We used their imaginations. Steve Campbell and John Lopez followed each other with UT-A&M, yin-yang brilliance, and they would go on to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and Houston Chronicle, respectively. Bobby Clay would grow from high school reporter to sports editor, and is now an editor in Atlanta. And Mike McAllister left our Dallas bureau for newspapers there.

We weren't the best sports section in the country by any means. But for one pumping out 160,000 copies a day, we were as good as any. At the national contests we didn't just place in the top 10 in our circulation bracket. They pulled our product out first and said, in effect, who are the other nine?

Cunningham would leave also. He's now the sports editor at the Houston Chronicle. But even his departure signaled how far we had come, because The Light was able to woo a Dallas Morning News whiz kid, Tim Kelly. The system kept producing talent, and trust me on this one: Today's unemployed writers, including Brad Townsend, Ken Sins and David Whitley, are good enough to work for any newspaper in the country.

What will we do now? Today, I can see the past better. For 10 years I crept out on limbs and loved it. I went from Artis Gilmore to David Robinson. I have been to Barcelona and to Converse. I worked with Cottonball and Larry, and liked each in its own way. I saw the Gunslingers and Riders buried, and a dome rise. I was caught in Alamo Stadium when the lights went out, and I was caught in a World Series earthquake. I sparred with Frank Brickowski and deadlines. I have been right and I have been wrong.

And as it all goes away – as I walk tomorrow to my driveway with only one newspaper waiting – the feeling of the old days remains sadly with me. I may never have more fun.

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

Remembering the way we were

Note: The Light's staff members were asked to share their memories of what it has been like to work at the newspaper. Here's what they remember:

That's what it's all about

I've reported about a number of things over my almost eight years at The Light that brought on a lot of heat for the newspaper. But a story published on Jan. 24, 1987, is one that represents for me The Light at its best.

Don Greer, a professor of plastic surgery at the UT Health Science Center, came into the newsroom and said he could not find his 17-year-old son, who had gone cycling the previous day and vanished. Greer checked all the area hospitals to see if any unidentified patients had been brought into their emergency rooms. None had arrived. He checked with all the local law-enforcement agencies to see if his son had gotten in trouble. Nothing.

I called the Sheriff's Department and discovered a teen-ager had had an accident in far East Bexar County. I also learned the EMS had transported a patient with head injuries to Brooke Army Medical Center.

I called BAMC and was informed they were treating a patient identified as a "John Doe" because he carried no identification and was in a coma with brain injury.

I notified Greer, the sheriff's deputy who worked the accident and an investigator with the Alamo Heights Police Department where Greer had filed a missing persons report. We all gathered at BAMC and Greer was reunited with his son, who later recovered.

That, to me, is what newspapering is all about.

–MICHAEL PEARSON
Staff reporter

Record of my family's life

A part of growing up on San Antonio's West Side for me was daily delivery of The Light. When I entered journalism, seeking a job here was the obvious choice.

The Light recorded the rollercoaster of my family's life beginning with birth and death, wedding and divorce notices.

When my father's pharmacy, a West Side landmark, filled its millionth prescription, Frank Trejo, one of the city's first Hispanic reporters, wrote an article.

And when the 84-year-old Walter's Pharmacy burned to the ground, a victim of arson, a week before review for placement on the register of historic buildings, The Light reported that, too.

Those of us on duty during Fiesta parades would watch from the windows of the second story newsroom. From that height and distance, I recalled a childhood of watching the processions from the curb beneath the neon perpetually blinking "The Light" at Broadway and McCullough.

Recollections of The Light now will join those childhood treasures in memory.

–IRENE ABREGO
Staff reporter

'Will You Marry Me?' edition

It was late one Saturday night. The final edition had just gone in and people in the composing room were talking to me about marriage. How long had I been dating my co-worker, Peggy Hendricks? Were we going to get married? How come I hadn't popped the question yet?

Actually, I said, I had been thinking about it and was just waiting for the right opportunity and the right method to propose. I had even picked up the ring that afternoon.

That's when Mary Everett, a composing room employee, suggested the front page – we could change the type, put in new words and propose in style. After a flurry of activity, writing and setting the type, we finally made a new Page One.

Knowing that Peggy was still in the newsroom, waiting on me to get off work, I sent down a proof of the front page, as is customary, for final review. But instead of the final edition, it was the "Will you marry me?" edition.

Everyone from the composing room crept down to watch Peggy's startled reaction as she read it. "Well, what do you say?" I asked. She nodded yes, and the newsroom burst into applause. The rest, as they say, is history, and we had our first child, Colin Michael Whisler, on Jan. 7.

–JOHN WHISLER
Former copy editor

A picture of faces

It is one of those pictures that forms in your mind and never leaves. It is a picture of faces.

It was the evening of April 27, 1979 – six hours after a deranged sniper turned the Battle of Flowers parade, one of San Antonio's most festive occasions, into one of its most terrifying.

The editors' attempts to organize the next day's paper while the story continued to unfold a few blocks up Broadway were thwarted by telephone calls from people calling up the newspaper for details. I told the switchboard operator to hold all calls except those from staffers.

Hours later the operator called back – to remind me she was still holding all calls.

It seems the spouses, parents and significant others of several of our staffers were upset with the operator's refusal to let their calls go through. Dinners were waiting, social engagements were in limbo and kids were in need of their moms.

I stood up and instructed everyone simply to "call home."

That's when I saw the picture that still remains in my mind. Every face in that crowded newsroom looked toward me – and every one featured a bewildered expression. A moment later, everyone reached for a phone.

–O'LENE STONE
Assistant city editor

Friendship becomes respect

When my husband, Ted Warmbold, then editor of The Light, died of AIDS in 1989, I initially fought with editors Ed Rademaekers and Jeff Cohen to keep the information out of the paper.

I shall never forget a final, brutal argument with Jeff at Humana Hospital. After Ted had a particularly bad seizure, Jeff and I were relegated to a small waiting room. I threatened to call Publisher George Irish and Hearst President Frank Bennack to demand that the information be kept out of the story.

I argued that when another prominent San Antonian recently had died of AIDS, Ted had decided against publishing the fact. Ted deserved the same consideration.

Jeff was unmoveable. "Listen," he told me, "Ted Warmbold trained me to be an editor and to make decisions. It's a student's job to go beyond his teacher. This is what Ted would want me to do – to make a better decision. We've got to publish that he died of AIDS."

Our argument was interrupted by a doctor who told us that Ted was brain dead. "Go home and prepare the funeral," the doctor said.

As Jeff and I did just that, I thought of his notion of going beyond your mentor in making tough decisions. And I remembered that I had once been a journalist, too, with a commitment to writing reality. More than any other factor, it was Jeff's stubborn professionalism during that sharp scene that reminded me of that commitment and convinced me that disclosure was essential. Jeff had been a close friend for eight years, but that day I came to respect him as an editor, too.

–CAROLYN NIZZI WARMBOLD
Features editor

Remembering 'A thousand lives'

Shortly after I joined The Light, Levi Strauss and Co. announced it was closing one of its garment factories here, leaving unemployed more than 1,000 people, mostly Mexican-American women who also were mothers, and moving the jobs abroad. It was the largest layoff in city history.

"A thousand lives," I said aloud to two of my fellow editors after the day's news meeting. "Why don't we follow their lives and see what really happens to people?"

For a year and more, reporter (since promoted to city editor) Jeannie Kever and photographer Andy King shadowed the garment workers, chronicling their ups and, mostly, their downs as they descended into a quagmire of disorganized and mismanaged programs aimed at putting them back to work. For our readers, for the city's leadership, even for the Levi Strauss management in San Francisco, it was both microeconomics and a morality play. We were undressing the system, but ours was an empathetic scrutiny.

For me, "A Thousand Lives" was local journalism at its best. It told a story that needed to be told, a story that many of the parties would have preferred to be left untold, and it changed life in our city, however slightly, for the better. I will immodestly say that both our elected leaders and our readers have paid greater attention to job retraining programs, the potential downside of free trade and the human face of unemployment, attention they might never have paid without the series.

By telling their story, we editors and reporters and photographers and artists said we cared. Now, as I and my family confront my own professional insecurities, I take comfort in the way those of us in The Light newsroom treated the Levi workers. What goes around, comes around.

–BOB RIVARD
Deputy managing editor

The day technology triumphed

One of the interesting aspects of working for The Light during the last 20 years has been the shift from the centuries-old hot type printing with lead and ink to the cleaner computer-generated type on film.

Although the shift to computer should have been made gradually, the change was anything but gradual in the newsroom. It took one day.

While 20 computers capable of editing and setting type had been installed for some time, no one was using them.

But on April 27, 1979, the "Fiesta sniper" opened fire on the Battle of Flowers parade crowd. It was easily the biggest story in the nation that day – made bigger because there were many reporters and photographers already at the site when the shooting started.

A tragic day in San Antonio's history had pumped a shot of adrenaline into every journalist in the city. That evening the wire services rarely sent a photo that was not from San Antonio. The news desk was inundated with local stories.

We needed to save time, and using the new computer system was the logical move. We decided to go with the new system. After 30 hectic minutes of training the editors caught on.

We produced the entire front section from local copy – all read, coded and set on the computer system. From that day forward, computers were the preferred editing tool in the newsroom.

–RAY FULLER
Editorial systems director

I broke the bank

Sportswriters can hide a lot of things on an expense account. Ask Buck Harvey. But a $751 phone bill was beyond the reach of all creative accounting principles.

I had gone to cover the Riders' two-week trip through Europe last spring. Considering the financial shape of The Light, it was a bold expenditure. I made it as painless possible for the bean counters by taking a lot of subways, ordering the cheapest thing on the indecipherable menus and washing my underwear in the hotel sink.

My Barcelona hotel was only supposed to cost $180 a night (or roughly 200,000 pesetas, give or take a million). I probably should have asked what kind of surcharge there was on international phone calls.

I made about two per day. All business-related, of course. That's why I was flabbergasted to be handed a bill for $1,600 (roughly 2 billion pesetas) after three days at the Catalan Inn.

"I'll need proof," I told the clerk. "Can I have a printout of my calls?"

She came back 10 minutes later with a list of every call made from the hotel for the past three days. We finally found one of mine.

"See," she said. "This call lasted five minutes and sixty-five seconds."

It was a lost cause. She made me a 14-page copy of the phone bill. I turned it in on the expense account and waited for the explosion.

As it turned out, the boss didn't kill me. But that phone bill probably helped do in The Light.

–DAVID WHITLEY
Staff reporter

It's been a ball!

Has it really been almost six years and more than 1,000 parties? It has been a ball – and San Antonio's special brand of hospitality and party style can't be beat.

What wonderful memories – legendary Cattle Barons' Galas (Willie Nelson crooning in front of the Alamo and George Strait singing at Mission San José) . . .tea with Queen Elizabeth . . .President Bush's State Dinner at the Majestic Theater . . .dining with the king and queen of Spain at the McNay . . .six fabulous Fiesta Weeks . . .Splendors (of Mexico) Gala at the Museum of Art . . .Fiesta royalty, debutantes, Symphony Belles . . . the list goes on.

Sharing these social events with The Light's readers has been sheer pleasure. And bravo to all the gracious party chairmen who raise much-needed funds for all the deserving non-profit organizations in town. Keep up the good work!

–LYNN CRYSTAL
Society columnist

All we could do was pray

Photographer Tommy Hultgren and I were in Brownsville last year trying to tie up some loose ends for a series on anencephalic babies, born with part of their brains missing.

We managed to get one of the mothers, Marta Garcia, to agree to be photographed at her child's grave, provided we could find the cemetery. With a little help from friends at the Brownsville Herald, we found it – in the middle of a field between the levee and the Rio Grande.

After a hectic afternoon, we showed up at Garcia's house and tried to drive as gingerly as possible (she had a two-week old baby in her arms) even though we only had two hours to get the picture, get her back to her house and get us to Harlingen to catch our plane back to San Antonio. We almost didn't find the grave.

Then we did – and here was the hard part. We had to stand and watch this woman who was visiting her child's grave for the first time since her death more than a year before.

The woman was weeping, barely able to hold on to the infant in her arms. So I asked her if she wanted to pray. We did. I didn't know what else to do. It was awkward just standing there. My heart went out to her. I put myself into the story for those few minutes – something that shouldn't have happened. It compromises your objectivity, I'm told. But I couldn't help it.

Well, we got the picture, but we missed our plane. That wasn't pretty either. We drove to Harlingen in record time, raced to the terminal, lugging our gear and luggage, and made it – in time to watch the plane take off. We eventually made it back to San Antonio and published the stories a few days later. Just all in a day's work.

–VERONICA FLORES
Staff reporter

Afflict the comfortable

One measure of a newspaper's success is the degree to which it makes a city's leaders (including the paper's editors) uncomfortable.

And by that gauge, the special projects team, formed in 1981 and disbanded in 1989, was proficient at turning up the heat.

Here's a tip of the hat to some of the projects team reporters who in my view embued The Light with its most memorable quality – aggressive reporting – through our last decade.

There was Kevin Johnson, who broke the City Towing "kickback" scandal; Danny Garcia, who went too deeply undercover and was arrested by immigration authorities when he joined a *coyote* group to report on alien smuggling across the Rio Grande; Jim Michaels, who found the "mystery" plane on a Kelly Air Force Base runway that turned out to be a CIA contract carrier smuggling arms to Angolan rebels; and Brett Skakun, who exposed how oilman and rancher Clinton Manges was attempting to buy influence in the state's courts and government agencies.

There was Dan Freedman, who spent some nervous hours as a captive at a Contra camp in Central America as angry rebels questioned him about how he located them; Anne Pearson, who expanded investigative techniques to business reporting for The Light; Michael Pearson, whose bellicose Southern drawl and trademark look of dumbfounded astonishment disguise one of the city's premier investigative reporters, who unmasked the city's vigilante policeman, Stephen Smith; and Mike Tolson, who, along with now-City Editor Jeannie Kever, produced magazine-quality stories and prose even after the projects team was disbanded.

After 15 years at The Light holding various positions, my proudest were as a reporter and then editor of the projects team. And no, I won't apologize for the heat.

–CARY CARDWELL
Assistant managing editor for news

The night I didn't say it

"Stop the presses."

It is phrase used in the climactic scenes of films, usually spouted by a harried editor running into the press room with the latest news.

As news editor, I once had the opportunity to use the magic phrase and didn't – a decision that has shamed me forever in the eyes of The Light copy desk.

The opportunity arose when we ran a front-page story about the release of a young girl who had been kidnapped near Boerne. The story included a color picture of the girl.

After the presses began running, we were incorrectly told the kidnapper had been charged with sexual assault. It is the policy of The Light, like all responsible media, not to identify people who have been sexually assaulted.

I raced down to the press room with the magic phrase on my lips. But after finding the press foreman amid the deafening roar of the presses I was silent as I swept my hand across my throat, motioning "cut." We took the girl's name and photo out and restarted the press – and I had blown my opportunity to shout "stop the presses."

Upon returning to the newsroom, my co-workers quickly quizzed me to see if I had made the most of my opportunity to use the classic phrase. When I told them I hadn't, they deservedly ridiculed me.

Now it is too late for anyone at The Light to shout "stop the presses." They have been silenced on their own.

–DAN E. BALCAR
Part-time news editor

You gotta have heart

When I heard the Oct. 6 announcement about The Light's sale or closure, I raced into work. I don't know why – I knew what had happened was irreversible – it just seemed instinctive. I felt like I was rushing to save someone's life.

The job is so different from any other – not better than, not worse than, just different. You can't understand heart unless you work somewhere where it's a required trait. And a daily newspaper requires heart.

Since the day of the announcement, my colleagues and I faced the fact of working with a sense of inevitability. It was kind of like feeling like you're going to sneeze all the time – you know it's going to happen, but you don't know when and you want to get it over with.

There were times I would edit a story and get stuck on the spelling of a person's name, or question a misplaced comma, or spend time verifying someone's title. I sometimes asked myself, on a particularly bad night, "Does anyone care?" Well, my message is this: You should care. You should care about every article, every report, everything in a newspaper. Don't accept it blindly – question it – but read it.

It is said that knowledge is power. You, the reader, have had two chances every day to learn, to gain that power. You now have only one. Please make use of it.

–MARC BONA
Copy edito

Drawing the 'death watch'

As a police reporter for The Light over the last 5½ years, I have watched people die in front of me, waited for scores of traum victims at hospitals to die in orde to update stories and also have been on "death watch" every tim dignitaries come to town.

Fortunately, nothing bad has ever happened on the "death watch." But I always wondered what these dignitaries thought about our preparing and waiting for something bad to happen to them.

It wasn't until that dark day in October when we learned of our upcoming demise that I felt I could empathize with them.

Until the end, I have been asked several times a day by sources, competitors, friends, family and readers about the death of our newspaper and our fate.

Please turn to next pag

San Antonio Light

A LOOK BACK

Continued from previous page

Now the tragedy has occurred and the newspaper, television and radio media are reporting on our death. Do they enjoy it? No, it could happen to them just as easily.

But, although it's curtains for this institution, my hopes are with those I work with. Will we have a rebirth of prosperity and happiness after our death? One can only pray. *Adios, amigos.*

–DAVID ELIZONDO
Police reporter

We found something valuable

When I first came to The Light seven years ago, sightings of Buck Harvey, who wrote his sports column from home, were brief and intermittent, and he was always wearing shorts regardless of the weather. So when a friend told me Buck was in the office and was actually wearing long pants, I had to see for myself. I strolled over and offered him some M&M's I was eating.

I maintain that an open bag of M&M's carries an implied rule of sharing, and to ignore this rule is to scoff at the laws of human decency. Buck swears I was flirting. In fact in his version of the encounter, I spotted him across the newsroom and broke into a dead run, leaping over desks and tackling him to proffer my symbolic "treats." But regardless, we were married about a year later.

Losing our jobs together has made us more aware of what really matters and how fortunate we actually are.

–PAM SIMS HARVEY
Graphics editor

Nobody knows your face

We journalists hate to admit it, but one reason we get into this business is to see our name in the paper, preferably on the front page. But when I first came to The Light, I rarely wrote stories long enough to merit a byline.

I was on the night police beat, which mostly consisted of waiting for somebody to get shot or stabbed or killed in a car crash. I'd sum up their life and death in three or four pithy sentences: "A 34-year-old South Side man was killed Tuesday. . ."

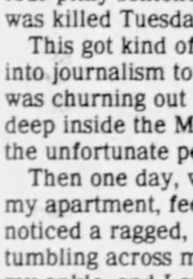
This got kind of depressing after awhile. I went into journalism to write about Big Things, and here I was churning out brief, formulaic paragraphs buried deep inside the Metro section. I felt as obscure as the unfortunate people I was writing about.

Then one day, walking through an open field near my apartment, feeling sorry for myself as usual, I noticed a ragged, windblown scrap of paper tumbling across my path. It wrapped itself around my ankle, and I saw it was a torn remnant from The Light. A strange impulse gripped me. I picked it up and turned it over, and there was my byline.

That's the newspaper business – nobody knows your face, but your name turns up in the strangest places. Eventually I got off the cops beat and occasionally I even made the front page, but the biggest thrill I ever got from seeing my name in print was that day I stood alone in the middle of an empty field with a muddy fragment of The Light in my hand.

–MARK LEWIS
Deputy editorial page editor

It wasn't war; it was survival



Sports coverage has often been billed as the front line in the San Antonio newspaper war. In many ways, it was not so much war as survival.

In 1984, I sprained an ankle at the NBA All-Star Weekend in Denver. On the day of the Slam-Dunk contest, I woke up with my foot looking like a grapefruit, only it was black and blue.

My first call went to Neil Landsman, then San Antonio Spurs beat writer for the Express-News. I talked him into carrying me to the hotel lobby and unloading me into a cab that supposedly would take me to the hospital.

Thanks for the ride, Neil. I might not have made it to the dunk contest on time without you.

–JERRY BRIGGS
Staff reporter

Saddest day was Seeman visit

On this day, when reality for me has taken a final, merciful turn, I am reminded of the saddest of my 1,367 days as a reporter for The Light.

It was a Sunday afternoon, Aug. 26, 1990, and I was planted in front of my television eating cold pizza and watching a football game when an assistant city editor called in search of a reporter.

The bodies of Erica Botello and Heidi Seeman had both been discovered, and I headed to Rolling Oaks Mall to get reaction from volunteers at the Heidi Search Center.

Already disturbed by the pain I saw in the volunteers' wide-eyed, glazed looks of loss, I slipped into a haze that did not lift until I found myself standing on the sidewalk of the Seemans' home.

Sadness for the family rooted my feet to the ground. It felt like hours before I made the short walk up to the Seemans' front door and knocked.

No answer.

I retreated, relieved I did not have to intrude on this family's pain. I was talking to a group of neighbors when a man we all suspected was an FBI agent knocked on the door. He entered, stayed no more than a couple of minutes, then left.

A figure my mind believes was Curtis Seeman then appeared, shrouded behind venetian blinds and curtains. He stood there to thank the neighbors who for weeks had tied ribbons around their trees, combed fields and, most importantly, been friends to the beleaguered family.

He then drew the blinds.

For several weeks, I did not sleep well, constantly thinking about the pain of people I never met. My prayers were for them, as if they had been my own family.

For four years, many of The Light's employees have been my extended family. I have little in common with many of them, yet those I number as friends know much about me, and I them. It will be hard to let them go.

Yet I must. On this day, I feel the walls that surrounded me when I first arrived here and knew no one rising again. This time, I am the one drawing the veils closed on a part of my life.

–GILBERTO REYES JR.
Staff reporter

The day my jokes backfired

I have always been one for the practical jokes. I guess it's just my way to relieve deadline stress. My favorite memory from The Light was when I was on the receiving end of this exercise – a payback I'm sure I deserved.

It was during the 1986 Fiesta, the year I became fascinated with cascarones. Where else but San Antonio could you run up to a stranger and hit them on the head with a confetti-filled egg grenade?

Our editorial cartoonist, John Darkow, handpainted a rotten egg, walked over and asked if he could give me an offical Fiesta hello. I consented, waiting for the typical confetti shower. After it hit my scalp, and dripped down my neck, I turned to John, only to see the whole newsroom laughing. They all were in on the joke. I laughed as well. I had seven more years to pay them back, one by one.

–JEFFREY HEINKE
Assistant managing editor for photography and graphics

That wild business department

Over the past three years, the business department has earned a reputation for the best-orchestrated, if not the healthiest, parties in the building. The idea got rolling with "Jeter Day," which consisted of wearing flannel shirts and gimme caps, drinking RC Cola out of bottles and eating Moon Pies. (Jeters, by the way, are people who wear flannel shirts and gimme caps, drink RC and eat Moon Pies.)

That was followed by "Generic Day," in which everyone wore black and white and we snacked on generic treats.

Perhaps the crowning achievement in the party art was the "Despedida Dick" party we held for the departure of Monterrey correspondent Dick J. Reavis. Dick wasn't at the party, so we borrowed a life-sized paperboy cutout The Light was using to promote the Flavor section at the time and pasted a photo of Dick's face over the model's face. We all made masks from the photo of Dick's face, and had a photo made in which everyone in the department looked like the guest of honor.

–DAVID KING
Business copy editor

The errors you never saw

San Antonians will never know the mistakes that *didn't* get into the paper.

Oh, sure, a mistake or two has gotten by the copy desk before at The Light, but no one realizes – not even my supervisors, I think – the number of errors we prevented from getting into print.

There was a boo-boo in a feature story about a high school band student. A typo resulted in the guy being described as a *drug* major, not a drum major. Ooops. And, let's see, how many times could we misspell María Antonietta Berriozábal's name? Berriozable. Beriozabal. Bereozabl. Whew!

Then there are those headlines that aren't pieced together just right. Like the word "clothed" inadvertently being separated to read "clot hed."

I got a kick out of catching these errors. It was fun. And I honestly think that the copy desk's "catches" not only saved this newspaper from big embarrassments (that's two r's and two s's) but from harassing (that's one r and two s's) attorneys two – oops, I mean, too.

–CATHY CHAPATY
Copy editor

THINGS I'LL REMEMBER

Name: Jeff Cohen.
Title: Managing Editor.
First job: 1976. Copy editor and reporter in The Light's sports department. I had a deafening UPI machine on my left and a sucking pneumatic tube by my right ear. In front of me sat Fred Walker, the screaming, cussing, garbage-can-kicking slot man, who gave me the fear of God and good advice: "Learn how this place works, son, and you'll go places." Sixteen years later it looks like I'm still going places.
Craziest day: Aug. 19, 1986. The bosses left me in charge when Stephen Smith shot Farrell Tucker, the thermometer hit an all-time record 108 and Mayor Cisneros was complaining loudly about the city manager's lady friend. Michael Pearson and Cary Cardwell saved my hide by nailing the Smith story.
Only my wife knows this story: At a late-1970s bowl game, The Other Paper's writer was terribly sick (hung over) and passed out in the second half. After the game, I helped write his story. Back in San Antonio, my editor wanted to know why the Express account read better.
Strangest letter: From Albert Bustamante's Washington lawyer. He promised to sue if we published a photograph of Bustie's out-of-district Dominion home. We printed the letter and photo anyway.
What makes a newsroom great?: The people. Wild photographers, reporters guarding scoops, Ivory Tower editorial writers, columnists always testing an idea, video wizards in the art department and the under-appreciated (but not here) night shift. It's a wonderful collection of interesting folks.
My favorite threat: From the mother of an oft-arrested pimp we incorrectly identified as a transvestite: "My son likes to hurt people when they say he dresses up like a girl," she screamed in my office.
I'll miss: The afternoon news meeting, the best hour in journalism, and my daily competition with assistant managing editor Jeff Heinke to sketch the most compelling front page. You can win tomorrow, Jeff.

Joan Collins chat high point

As an infant I lived in a house, now gone, behind The Light. As a child I visited the lobby with my father to pick up a remote control car I won selling subscriptions. And as a teen I appreciated the shadow of the building during Fiesta parades.

During my more than seven years with The Light, I've reported from couture showrooms in New York and waded in the mud with photographers to get just the perfect angle for a fashion cover.

But the biggest surprise was my "chat" with Joan Collins. Her reputation preceded her and I was apprehensive. When I walked in for the exclusive interview I mentioned she seemed taller on television. Collins jumped to her feet and declared herself taller than me. A full 15 of my allotted 20 minutes were spent finding a mirror and measuring ourselves. She isn't taller than me.

–DELORES KELLY CARSON
Fashion reporter

High visibility new experience

I had some reservations about accepting my job at The Light.

After years as a freelance writer, a regular paycheck – one unlikely to bounce, no less – seemed incredibly reassuring. And, I would finally be able to afford health insurance.

But I never dreamed I would be offered a column on the front page. I had generally avoided high-profile positions, preferring to work in the quiet anonymity of the background. The high visibility would be a big change, and I worried that it would change me. I vowed not to allow myself to become inaccessible or separated from the common folk.

The day my first column appeared, along with a color picture of me, I boarded my regular bus for work and two elderly women looked up in obvious recognition.

"You are the one from the newspaper," one said in Spanish as the other nodded.

I squirmed as I introduced myself, and she returned the introduction and asked, "Can you get us some Loteria cards?"

–CARLOS GUERRA
Columnist

Working on Hope Time

Lackland Air Force Base can be a lonely place, especially when you've been waiting two hours for Bob Hope. Darkness had fallen on this October 1990 day as I and several other reporters paced back and forth.

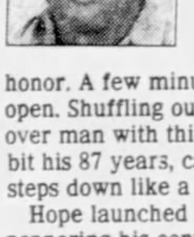
Hope was here for the re-naming of a base theater in his honor. A few minutes before 7 p.m., the door swung open. Shuffling out the door came a frail, hunched-over man with thinning red hair who looked every bit his 87 years, carefully maneuvering the three steps down like a tap dancer in slow motion.

Hope launched into an impromptu monologue, peppering his conversation with vaudeville quips and off-the-cuff comments. In a matter of seconds, his eyes shone like a sapphire spotlight, his shoulders reared back, he moved like a young man and, as he has done so many times before, he captured the audience.

Half an hour later, we were still laughing, and Hope seemed to have all the time in the world. Meanwhile, a dozen generals, Mayor Lila Cockrell and every television station waited on the other side of the base. They would wait a few minutes longer. We were all on Hope Time.

–ROBERT WYNNE
Television writer

Deadline at the ice house



I'll never forget when I covered the Tejano Conjunto Festival in May 1988. I was assigned a portable computer to file my piece from Rosedale Park that night at 10:15 p.m.

Everything was going fine until I showed up at the utility room where I was to use a phone line to transmit. It was 10:15 p.m., but no one was there to unlock the room.

I raced to a nearby 7-Eleven and somehow convinced the clerk there I needed to use his phone line for an emergency for The San Antonio Light.

In between my attempts to log on, I had to relinquish the phone line so the clerk could run credit card purchases. I had the computer's phone lines entangled over the magazine rack, with a line of customers looking strangely at me, the clerk impatient and the modem line at The Light busy on several tries.

At 10:38 p.m. I finally managed to transmit my story as an exasperated clerk and a waiting line of customers looked at me with a mixture of anger and amusement. I raced outside to a pay phone and called in to make sure it had arrived intact. It had.

Whew. I don't think I had ever sweated so profusely in such short a time.

–RAMIRO BURR
Staff reporter

Artist dangerous with airbrush

In 1968, when I was a cub reporter at The Light, the role of the staff artist was considerably different than what they do with our high-design, Macintosh manipulators today. Artists then mainly touched up photographs to make them print better on the old presses.

One day during the Stock Show and Rodeo, City Editor Jimmy Williamson was perched like an old owl leafing through the first edition. All of a sudden he hollered the name of the artist and instructed him to get his, um, body over here.

What Williamson's eagle eye had spotted was that the artist, a man of family sensibilities, had been offended by a full-page ad purchased by an area rancher to display photographs of his prize bulls.

Using his airbrush as a scalpel, the artist had converted them to steers.

The second edition was held while the photos were washed and reshot, and the page was replated.

–RICK CASEY
Columnist

'I have a message ...'

It was 1970. Former Rio Grande Valley Congressman Lloyd Bentsen had defeated U.S. Sen. Ralph Yarbrough to become the Democratic nominee for the Senate. His Republican opponent was Houston Congresssman George Bush. Both campaigned vigorously in San Antonio. The San Antonio dailies endorsed Bentsen.

The day before the election, a political writer for the Express and I covered Bush's final local stop downtown. It was not a memorable speech. What happened afterward was.

As we were walking across Auditorium Circle, an auto pulled alongside us. Bush was the front-seat passenger. In his usual informal style, he said, "I want to let you fellas know that even though your papers are supporting my opponent, I think both of you did a fair job in reporting my campaign. I also have a message for you to send back to your editors."

As the auto sped away, Bush stuck his right hand out the window and raised a finger in the air in a familiar sign, proving that even future presidents are not immune from expressing graphic editorial opinion.

–JOE CARROLL RUST
Associate editor

They read what I wrote

The greatest thing: Walking in a high school field house, hearing people talk about something I'd written in that day's paper.

"Read about the kid who hit the 45-foot shot at the buzzer?" is how the conversation usually went, give or take the sport.

That I was somehow impacting the lives of those in the bleachers made my spine tingle and my heart race.

For I knew in a few seconds, their thoughts would be on something else, on something distant and far away. But in that one instance, in that one speck of human history, they thought about what I'd written.

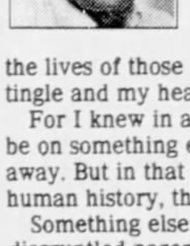
Something else: Picking up the telephone when a disgruntled parent is on the other end. Usually they were upset because I'd scribed something negative about their son or daughter. At least I knew, in San Antonio, that parents supported high school athletics. That made me smile.

In the coming months, my spine will tingle in another place. A parent will gripe at me for telling the world his son fumbled on a field far from this city.

What a wonderful two years it has been.

–KEVIN LYONS
Sports reporter

Journalists were stunned silent



One particular memory about The Light will always stick out in my mind. This happened back in the '80s. I was sitting at my desk, writing, when I noticed a few of my colleagues slowly gathering in front of the TV at city desk – a common enough occurrence in a room full of news hounds. Someone said the Challenger was about to blast off.

I kept on working, figuring if you've seen one lift off, you've seen them all, right? I don't remember exactly what happened next, but somebody gasped or something. I looked up and saw my good friend, Gail Rosenblum, standing there with her hand over her mouth. I rushed over to the TV, where a big crowd had congregated by now, and saw the evil-looking "Y" shape of smoke, heard the announcer shouting that the Challenger had exploded.

The thing that stands out most about this in my mind is that for once, a group of journalists had witnessed an event together and no one had a snide comment or pithy aside to offer. No one said a word. We all just stood there feeling stunned and absolutely helpless.

–MELISSA FLETCHER STOELTJE
Staff reporter

Combat pay should be included

The newsroom was virtually empty. Lunchtime on a nice day has that effect on this place. But the solitude was interrupted by the menacing figure of Sgt. Philip Harrison in full military regalia.

Harrison, upset by a flip comment in a Buck Harvey column, wanted to defend his son, the honorable Shaquille O'Neal, who then was at LSU. It didn't matter that I was the only person in sports at the time. Harrison had found a victim.

During his tirade, I wondered if my salary as assistant sports editor included combat pay. I quietly questioned the parentage of our security guards too.

The story had a happy ending though. Once Harrison realized Harvey was not present, and after 20 minutes reviewing the damage the column had caused his son, a sense of calm came over him. Harrison, all 6-foot-6 of him, shook hands and left quietly.

Too bad the family moved to Orlando ...

–JIM LEFKO
Assistant sports editor

H-E-B®

We would
like to thank the
San Antonio Light
for 112 years of
excellence
in journalism
and community
support.

We will miss you.